

Mission in Transition: Planning for the End of UN Peacekeeping in Haiti

NAMIE DI RAZZA



Cover Photo: Members of the Mission to Support Justice in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) participate in a ceremony in Puerto Principe, marking the UN's transition in Haiti from the large-scale UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to the leaner, smaller peacekeeping mission MINUJUSTH. October 16, 2016. EFE News Agency/Alamy Live News.

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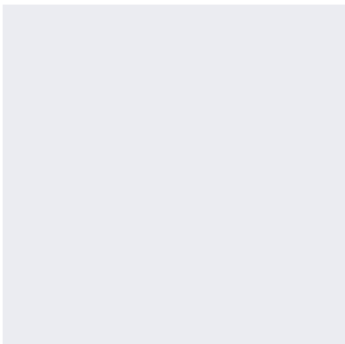
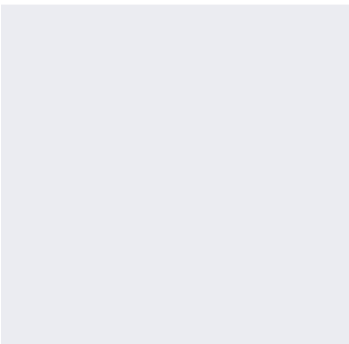
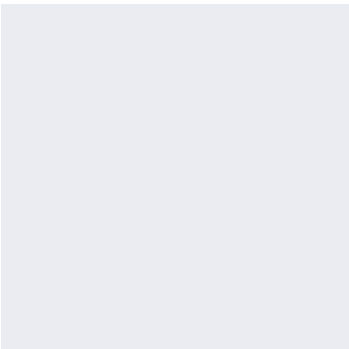
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Abbreviations

DFS	UN Department of Field Support
DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DSRSG	Deputy special representative of the secretary-general
DSRSG/RC/HC	DSRSG/resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator
FPU	Formed police unit
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework
MINUJUSTH	UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti
MINUSTAH	UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
SRSG	Special representative of the secretary-general
UNCT	UN country team
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	UN Development Programme

Executive Summary

The process of reconfiguring, closing, and handing over responsibilities to a UN country team or host-state institutions is a crucial—and challenging—part of the life cycle of a UN peacekeeping mission. Transitions have been a central feature of UN peacekeeping in Haiti, in particular, which has gone through numerous transitions since the 1990s. This paper focuses on the two most recent transitions: one from the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), or from a multidimensional peacekeeping operation involving a substantial military component to a small peace operation focused on police and rule of law; and the ongoing transition toward the closure of MINUJUSTH and preparations for the eventual handover to other actors.

The first of these transitions—ending MINUSTAH—was a long-planned exercise that the UN was considering as early as 2008, four years after its deployment. While some of the root causes of instability in Haiti were still present, the mission had put an end to political violence and averted a civil war, making its exit an understandable option. These efforts were abruptly halted, however, by a devastating earthquake in 2010, followed by a cholera outbreak attributable to UN peacekeepers, and then again by electoral crises and Hurricane Matthew in 2015 and 2016. This series of crises led to multiple episodes of “transition planning” that made Haitians and UN staff skeptical of any intent to close MINUSTAH.

As a result, the transition from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH encountered several pitfalls. First, while UN staff were actively working on the transition process, they tended to overly focus on bureaucratic processes and outputs rather than a strategic and substantive vision; there were many documents, assessments, workshops, and transition plans, but an apparent lack of political strategy driving these efforts in the field. Second, while the mission sought to pursue an inclusive process, consultations with partners and the host state did not prove entirely effective. Third, the decision to establish MINUJUSTH was political and headquarters-based, driven by the Security Council and the Secretariat in New York while sidelining field personnel to ensure a clear-cut break with

MINUSTAH. Finally, the role of the support side of the mission was neglected—or underestimated—which, in the end, led to a rapid and chaotic liquidation of assets and human resources.

Beyond the complications of closing MINUSTAH, MINUJUSTH has faced its own organizational challenges. First, it has found itself at both ends of the transition process, simultaneously taking over from MINUSTAH and preparing to hand over to other stakeholders in a two-year timeframe. As a result, it has a dual identity: on the one hand, it is a new mission that needed to set a strategy and start activities, while on the other, it is a closing mission that already needed to be planning for its withdrawal. Second, while the mission has a short timeframe and a small footprint, it has had to undertake a substantive shift in strategy and activities, which has proved difficult. Finally, while MINUJUSTH has learned some lessons from MINUSTAH as it prepares for its departure, uncertainties around the future of Haiti and the UN presence there complicate any transition planning.

As the UN and its member states decide on the future UN role in Haiti and on MINUJUSTH’s drawdown and exit, they should draw on several lessons learned from past and current transitions:

- **UN peacekeeping missions cannot do nation-building, but they should be politically engaged.** While the UN can provide political, security, institutional, and technical assistance, these efforts cannot compensate for nationally driven reform to address the root causes of instability in Haiti. Nonetheless, political engagement by the UN and member states is key to encouraging the changes needed.
- **Successive UN missions should be linked.** Linking the closure of MINUSTAH with the start-up of MINUJUSTH would have made the transition more coherent and improved management of public perceptions and internal frustrations. To avoid a similar rupture, the Security Council and the Secretariat should provide MINUJUSTH the opportunity to properly prepare for the follow-on UN presence.
- **Peacekeeping missions should plan for transitioning under less-than-ideal conditions.** As the Security Council is unlikely to go back on its intention to withdraw peacekeepers from Haiti,

the Secretariat should properly plan for a possible exit in a context of instability and unachieved benchmarks, conduct the necessary risk analysis, and prepare communication and mitigation plans.

- **Peacekeeping transitions are not just about process; they are also about vision.** While MINUSTAH’s civilian component focused on bureaucratic processes, its police component articulated a strategic and forward-looking narrative that Security Council members could buy into. MINUJUSTH’s transition, likewise, should be based on a clear vision and connected to that of the government, civil society, and the UN country team.
- **Peacekeeping missions need to coordinate with other stakeholders and promote national ownership.** Better and more meaningful integration is needed between UN headquarters and the field, the mission’s police and civilian components, the mission and the UN country team, and the UN and the government. MINUJUSTH’s political strategy should particularly focus on giving Haitian authorities ownership.
- **The support aspect of transitions should not be neglected.** Liquidating old peace operations like MINUSTAH is a cumbersome enterprise, and both the Security Council and the Secretariat should be ready to dedicate enough time and resources to it—particularly when a mission is simultaneously pursuing a substantive mandate.
- **The UN needs to pay particular attention to human resources and the human aspect of transitions.** To ensure a smoother handover, better legacy, and stronger institutional memory for a follow-on presence, leaders should prepare staff to exit, incentivize them to deliver until the end of a mission, and strike a balance between old and new staff in a successor mission. MINUJUSTH’s transition out of Haiti should therefore ensure the cohesiveness and well-being of staff.

Introduction

While some UN peace operations have stayed in countries for years or even decades, they are a fundamentally temporary measure to allow peace processes to settle, conflict environments to be stabilized, or states to be rebuilt. Therefore, the process of transitioning from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and, more specifically, from the presence of a UN mission to its closure and subsequent handover to a UN country team or host-state institutions, is a crucial part of the life cycle of a UN mission.

As UN peace operations face increased political scrutiny, budget cuts, and calls for smaller footprints on the ground, member states are taking a particular interest in exit strategies, and effective transitions are a key challenge for the Secretariat.¹ Transitions are more than a mission’s exit; they should be strategic and forward-looking exercises aimed at adapting the UN strategy and posture to changed circumstances on the ground. Planning for adequate transitions adapted to the needs of the host country and ensuring their smooth and effective implementation are essential to prevent a relapse into conflict or instability. It is likewise essential to avoid an eventual return of UN peacekeeping operations, which would represent a costly and difficult setback.

Haiti’s peacekeeping transitions have been particularly challenging and imperfect. The 1990s witnessed the deployment of multiple peace operations—from peacekeeping to special political missions—and of military and civilian interventions by the US, the Organization of American States, and the UN.² All these missions—mandated to secure the country, to train police, or to support electoral processes—were initially considered successful but later proved not to have brought sustainable stability to Haiti.

The political crisis triggered by controversial elections in 2000, the resumption of political violence under the second mandate of President

¹ Transitions are defined as changes in the configuration of the UN presence in a country and “cover significant changes in the Security Council mandated presence, including start-up, reconfiguration, and drawdown or withdrawal of a UN mission.” UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)/Department of Field Support (DFS) Division for Policy, Evaluation and Training, *Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal*, April 2, 2013.

² MINUHA (September 1993–June 1996), MANUH (July 1996–July 1997), MITNUH (August 1997–November 1997), MIPONUH (December 1997–March 2000), and MICAHA (February 2001).

Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and an armed rebellion that led to the president's departure in 2004 justified the deployment of a multidimensional, integrated UN mission, ten years after the first peacekeeping operation in the country. The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) received a comprehensive mandate to address the root causes of the crisis. In a country where there was no "war," strictly speaking, the mission comprised up to 13,000 troops. It helped put an end to the political violence in 2004 and carried out significant military operations against gangs to reduce criminal violence. Through its capacity-building mandate, it also helped rebuild institutions, especially the Haitian National Police, and, with more limited success, reform the justice sector.³ Despite its contributions to the improvement of security and the rule of law, the scandals associated with the mission, including the cholera outbreak caused by its personnel and a record number of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, have tended to overshadow its successes and taint its image.

After a series of natural disasters (including the destructive 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew in 2016) as well as the turmoil of the electoral crisis and political transition from October 2015 to February 2017, and in a context of budgetary pressure on UN peace operations, the Security Council decided to draw down and withdraw MINUSTAH in 2017. In its place, the council established a leaner, smaller peacekeeping mission, the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). This mission has no military component and is mandated to focus on police, human rights, and the rule of law. It is expected to be the last peacekeeping operation in Haiti and to close within a two-year timeframe.

As a result, Haiti has been undergoing two types of transition:

- The recent transition from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH, or from a multidimensional peacekeeping operation involving a substantial military component to a small peace operation focused on police and the rule of law; and
 - The ongoing transition toward the closure of MINUJUSTH and preparations for the eventual handover to other actors, including the UN country team (UNCT), host-state institutions, and possibly a special political mission.
- The recently established mission, MINUJUSTH, is therefore a "transition mission" par excellence, and a unique configuration for analyzing peacekeeping transitions, including reconfiguration and withdrawal. This policy paper looks at lessons learned from both the previous and the current transitions. In particular, it explores the challenges related to planning and implementing both transitions from a political, substantive, and organizational point of view.⁴ For both missions, it notably explores the following issues:
- Transition planning, including the political dynamics that influenced the decision-making process, the mission and the Secretariat's transition plans, gaps between UN bureaucratic plans and the reality on the ground, and the limited role of the host state, the UNCT, civil society, and donors in the planning phase;
 - Management, logistical, and administrative challenges before, during, and after the transition, notably in terms of human resources and liquidation of assets; and
 - Issues related to business continuity and changes in substantive areas of work.
- The report first examines the drawdown and closure of MINUSTAH, including the multiple attempts at defining a transition plan, the political and institutional dynamics behind transition decisions, and the many challenges from a support perspective related to the liquidation and the management of human resources. It then analyzes the existential dilemmas of MINUJUSTH, which, as a mission at both ends of a transition process, seeks to reconcile substantive tasks with transitional tasks, limited resources with ambitious objectives, and legacy with new approaches—all while facing the ongoing, complex challenge of building an exit strategy in an uncertain environment.

³ Namie Di Razza, *L'ONU en Haïti: Ambitions et déconvenues des opérations de paix multidimensionnelles*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010.

⁴ Forty-five interviews were conducted in New York and Port-au-Prince with UN officials—including from DPKO and from the civilian and police components of MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH—as well as civil society and NGO representatives, member-state representatives, and Haitian stakeholders. Two field trips were conducted from February 9 to 19 and from July 4 to 11, 2018.

Ending MINUSTAH: The Rambling Path of a Long-Planned but Unclear Transition

Ending MINUSTAH and planning for a transition from peacekeeping in Haiti was a long-planned exercise.⁵ In 2008, after four years of deployment, significant reduction of political and criminal violence, and successful presidential elections, the UN was already considering transitioning, and an exit team had started working on a consolidation plan at the mission level. At that time, MINUSTAH's contributions to the stabilization of Haiti were visible and recognized almost unanimously. Established in 2004, MINUSTAH had put an end to political violence and averted a civil war in the turmoil surrounding President Aristide's departure. The mission had also countered criminality and gang violence, including through robust operations in Cité Soleil and other areas of Port-au-Prince.⁶ From an institution-building perspective, MINUSTAH had supported the state in organizing credible elections, solidifying state institutions, establishing and training a reformed national police, and starting to work on justice reform.

Some of the root causes of instability in Haiti were still present, but these went beyond the capacity of a peacekeeping operation. Haiti still had a propensity for social unrest and popular violence due to a contested social contract, rampant

inequality, structural corruption, and underdevelopment, leading to contentious relations between the state and its citizens and between elites and non-elites. The UN peacekeeping operation was neither equipped nor mandated to solve these governance, peacebuilding, and development challenges.⁷

As MINUSTAH's exit was an understandable option in this context, reflections on a transition started in 2007. These led to the preparation of a consolidation plan, including the reduction of all components and the streamlining of activities beginning in 2008. Five benchmarks with indicators of progress in key areas were defined.⁸

These efforts were abruptly put on hold when, on January 12, 2010, a major earthquake caused the deaths of 220,000 people, including 96 peacekeepers. Instead of continuing to downsize, MINUSTAH was strengthened to respond to the humanitarian needs of the disaster, rebuild institutions, and ensure that the country would not again fall into instability. For many analysts, "the earthquake destroyed most of what MINUSTAH had built."⁹ A cholera outbreak later that year—the source of which was a UN peacekeeping camp—further hampered "stabilization" and led to lasting critique of MINUSTAH for "bringing more harm than good to the country."¹⁰

The withdrawal of surge military and police capacities that had been deployed in the aftermath of the earthquake began in 2011, and in 2012, the secretary-general outlined a reconfiguration and consolidation plan for the mission.¹¹ However,

5 The UN transition policy describes early planning as a key principle. MINUSTAH, however, did not consider the transition from the outset of being deployed. One UN official noted that the transition is often an afterthought, and benchmarking is only implemented a ways into the mission's deployment. Interview with UN official, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

6 All interlocutors acknowledged the role of MINUSTAH in reducing criminal violence, including kidnappings, and in strengthening democratic institutions through its support to the last three presidential elections. However, the offensive operations conducted against the gangs in Haiti were also marked by allegations of civilian casualties caused by MINUSTAH. Cahal McLaughlin and Siobhan Wills, *It Stays with You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti*, Queens University Belfast, Film Studies Department, Documentary, June 2, 2017.

7 Di Razza, *L'ONU en Haïti depuis 2004: Ambitions et déconvenues des opérations de paix multidimensionnelles*.

8 Benchmarks include: (1) continued progress in the resolution of political differences through dialogue and the successful completion of a cycle of elections that culminates in the smooth installation of a democratically chosen president in 2011; (2) extension of State authority throughout the country through the establishment of legitimate, transparent, accountable democratic State institutions, down to the local level, with the capacity to collect and disburse funds for the benefit of the population, including the establishment of a viable system of border management; (3) establishment of a sustainable security structure that enables Haiti to respond effectively to potential threats within the country and along its land and maritime borders, while respecting international standards and individual freedoms; (4) establishment of an independent and credible judicial and penal system that respects and upholds human rights and is accessible to all citizens; (5) lasting stability will require prevention of any further decline in living conditions, delivery of basic services to the most vulnerable, tangible improvement in the living standards of the population and creating the conditions for economic recovery. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2008/586, August 27, 2008.

9 Interview with UN official, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2018.

10 Interview with NGO representative in New York, January 2018. As of November 30, 2014, the Ministry of Public Health and Population had recorded 719,377 suspected cases and 8,767 cholera-related deaths since 2010. UN OCHA, *UN Cholera Fact Sheet—December 2014*, January 13, 2015, available at www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/haiti/document/un-cholera-fact-sheet-december-2014. For a critical analysis of the lack of accountability of MINUSTAH in the years that followed the outbreak, see Transnational Development Clinic, Global Health Justice Partnership, and L'Association Haïtienne de Droit de l'Environnement, *Peacekeeping without Accountability: The United Nations' Responsibility For The Haitian Cholera Epidemic*, 2013.

11 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2012/678, August 31, 2012.

transition discussions stalled again due to the impact of delayed and contested elections in 2015 and 2016 as well as the damage caused by a series of hurricanes, including Hurricane Matthew in October 2016.

As the UN policy on transitions points out, “Unforeseen political dynamics and potential security setbacks may influence transitions.”¹² In the case of Haiti, the 2010 earthquake, the cholera outbreak, delayed elections, and devastation caused by the 2016 hurricane season (especially Hurricane Matthew) all impacted transition efforts and protracted the process. These multiple episodes of “transition planning” made both the local population and UN staff skeptical of any professed intent to close MINUSTAH. As a consequence, it seems that UN field staff did not earnestly consider the actual transition, which ended up being inefficiently organized.

Several pitfalls have thus affected the transition from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH. First, while UN staff were actively working on the transition process, they tended to overly focus on bureaucratic processes and outputs rather than a strategic and substantive vision; there were many documents, workshops, and transition plans, but an apparent lack of political vision. Second, while the mission sought to pursue an inclusive process, consultations with partners and the host state did not prove entirely effective. Third, the decision to establish MINUJUSTH was political and headquarters-based, driven by the Security Council and the Secretariat in New York while sidelining field personnel. Finally, the role of the support side of the mission was neglected—or underestimated—which, in the end, led to a rapid and chaotic liquidation of assets and human resources.

Box 1. Security Council language on MINUSTAH’s transition

Resolution 1780 October 15, 2007	The council starts reconfiguring MINUSTAH, reduces the number of troops from 7,200 to 7,060, and increases the number of police from 1,951 to 2,091. It also requests that the secretary-general report on the implementation of MINUSTAH’s mandate, taking into account a review of the mission’s activities and composition, and develops a “consolidation plan with appropriate benchmarks to measure and track progress, in consultation with the Haitian government.”
Resolution 1840 October 14, 2008	While maintaining the mission’s configuration until the capacity of the Haitian National Police increases, the Security Council welcomes “the development of five benchmarks and indicators to measure progress being made towards the consolidation of stability in Haiti” and “requests the Secretary-General to continue updating the Consolidation Plan on the basis of this outline.”
Resolution 1892 October 13, 2009	The Security Council further adjusts the configuration of the mission, reducing the military component from 7,060 to 6,940 troops and increasing the police component from 2,091 to 2,211 personnel. It also emphasizes the need for progress in the area of socioeconomic development, coherence between peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and development, and a coordinated UN approach to peacebuilding. It continues to request that the secretary-general update the consolidation plan and refine benchmarks and indicators of progress.
Resolution 1908 January 19, 2010	In the aftermath of the earthquake, the Security Council changes its approach and substantially strengthens MINUSTAH’s capacities to support recovery, reconstruction, and stability. One week after the earthquake, it increases the number of troops from 6,940 to 8,940 and of police from 2,211 to 3,711.

¹² UN DPKO/DFS Division for Policy, Evaluation and Training, *Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal*, April 2, 2013.

<p>Resolution 1927 June 4, 2010</p>	<p>The Security Council adds a surge capacity of an additional 680 police for a total of 4,391 authorized police personnel. However, the Security Council and the secretary-general both stress that “the impact of the earthquake... has not destroyed the gains towards stabilization made in the past few years but has created new obstacles as well as new opportunities.” The council also specifically focuses on the role of MINUSTAH in protecting the population and establishing a protective environment for all.</p>
<p>Resolution 2012 October 14, 2011</p>	<p>The Security Council recognizes that “Haiti has made considerable strides since the tragic earthquake of 12 January 2010, particularly [because] for the first time in its history, Haiti has experienced a peaceful transfer of power between one democratically elected president and another from the opposition.” While recognizing that the security situation remains fragile and that the earthquake was followed by an increase in all major categories of crime, it states that the overall security situation “has improved..., allowing a partial drawdown of MINUSTAH’s military and police capabilities as the first step to ending the temporary surge capacities decided by the Security Council after the earthquake.” It encourages greater Haitian ownership of reconstruction and reduces the number of troops from 8,940 to 7,340 and of police from 4,391 to 3,241. However, the council also highlights the importance of condition-based and security-related decisions for the future of MINUSTAH.</p>
<p>Resolution 2070 October 12, 2012</p>	<p>The trend toward a transition from MINUSTAH and a reduction of personnel continues. The council evokes a series of successes and “a number of political milestones indicative of progress in the process of stabilization.”¹³ It describes the security situation as fragile (with an increase in homicides and continued threat of criminal gangs) but “relatively stable,” which “[allows] MINUSTAH to continue to drawdown its post-earthquake troop levels and to adapt its configuration without undermining the security and stability of Haiti” (though again it recognizes “the importance of condition-based security-related decisions”). It reduces the number of troops from 7,340 to 6,270 and of police from 3,241 to 2,601. The council starts to highlight transition planning, mentioning the finalization of the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF), which is aligned with MINUSTAH’s “future conditions-based consolidation plan.” The resolution also underlines the importance of “focusing the Mission’s activities on a core set of mandated tasks achievable within a reasonable time frame and concluding with the Government of Haiti a transition compact that will set out a concentrated number of benchmarks that will serve as key indicators of progress in the stabilization process.”</p>
<p>Resolution 2119 October 10, 2013</p>	<p>The Security Council recognizes the election delays but continues to describe a relatively stable security situation allowing the mission to continue its drawdown and reconfiguration. The military component is reduced from 6,270 to 5,021 troops, and the police component is maintained.</p>
<p>Resolution 2180 October 14, 2014</p>	<p>The military component is further reduced to 2,370 troops, but the council expresses its readiness to adapt the force level if conditions change in light of the upcoming elections.</p>

¹³ In particular, the confirmation by the parliament of a new prime minister, the installation of the Superior Council of the Judiciary, and the publication of the constitutional amendment.

<p>Resolution 2243 October 14, 2015</p>	<p>The council adopts what can be considered the transition resolution. Even if “the humanitarian situation in Haiti has deteriorated significantly,” the Security Council “affirms its intention, based on the Security Council’s review by 15 October 2016 of Haiti’s overall capacity to ensure security and stability and on the security conditions on the ground, to consider the possible withdrawal of MINUSTAH and transition to a future United Nations presence beginning no sooner than 15 October 2016, to continue to assist the Government of Haiti to consolidate peace, including support to the Haitian National Police.” It welcomes the revision of the Integrated Strategic Framework, which identified areas for enhanced collaboration between MINUSTAH and the country team and requests the secretary-general to conduct a strategic assessment mission to present recommendations on the future presence and role of the UN in Haiti, “preferably by 90 days after the inauguration of the new President, and ideally after the formation of a new government.” It recognizes that due to the reduced capacity of MINUSTAH, “with a view to ensuring continuous progress as the Mission transitions towards the post-consolidation period, MINUSTAH has prioritized the mandated activities and will continue to focus its resources on priority areas, while progressively disengaging from others in coordination with the Haitian Government and international partners.” It mentions the goal of a minimum of 15,000 fully operational Haitian police officers by 2016, set by the Haitian National Police’s 2012–2016 Development Plan, and asks the secretary-general to provide a comprehensive assessment highlighting security conditions “with a specific focus on the capacity of the Haitian National Police.”</p>
<p>Resolution 2313 October 13, 2016</p>	<p>While mentioning Hurricane Matthew and the revised electoral calendar, the Security Council requests that the secretary-general conduct a strategic assessment mission “by the end of the current mandate and preferably after the inauguration of a newly elected president” in order to present recommendations on the future presence and role of the UN in Haiti. It reaffirms its “intention to consider the possible withdrawal of MINUSTAH and transition to a future United Nations presence beginning no sooner than 15 April 2017,” which is six months later than had been envisioned in the previous resolution. It decides that the mission “will continue to prepare for its transition, including through the development of a Transition Plan and the focused implementation of the Mission’s Consolidation Plan and takes note of MINUSTAH’s and the United Nations country team’s ongoing preparatory work on a joint transition plan.”</p>
<p>Resolution 2350 April 13, 2017</p>	<p>The council announces the end of MINUSTAH, praising its role supporting the political process, professionalizing the police, and maintaining a secure and stable environment. It decides on a gradual drawdown during the final six-month period, with a full withdrawal by October 15, 2017. It also establishes MINUJUSTH as a follow-on mission, highlighting the importance of “a successful and responsible transition between MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH.” It requests that a joint transition plan be completed within the six-month period so MINUJUSTH can be operational immediately following MINUSTAH’s closure.</p>

THE PRIMACY OF PROCESS: A MEANDERING, BUREAUCRATIC TRANSITION

MINUSTAH personnel, and specifically the civilian component, produced multiple versions of transition plans and assessments. The mission both worked on mission-specific transition documents and used existing planning tools such as the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF), UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), mission concepts, and results-based budgeting. At different phases of the process, MINUSTAH teams sought to design a transition plan that would align with, or would be anchored in, these broader, parallel planning documents.

However, the overall transition suffered from the prioritization of process over substance, and time and energy were lost in the meanders of the bureaucracy. MINUSTAH itself became lost in processes, trying to improvise a transition at a technical level without a clear strategic vision provided by leadership. Even within the multitude of documents and plans produced by the mission in the field, a convincing strategy was not conveyed. Eventually, the transition strategy that was used came from UN teams in New York.

The Multiple Civilian-Led Transition Planning Exercises

MINUSTAH's civilian component worked on several documents to guide the transition, including a consolidation plan, the revision of the ISF, a so-called "transition plan," and various assessments and mapping exercises.

The 2013 Consolidation Plan

After being stalled by the earthquake, discussions on the transition resumed in 2012. The consolidation plan, which was integrated as an annex in the secretary-general's 2013 report on Haiti, was the first formal transition tool.¹⁴ The consolidation plan for 2013–2016 aimed to narrow the scope of the mission's activities to a limited set of tasks: "The Mission will progressively reduce its engage-

ment in areas in which other international actors are better placed to achieve results, where long-term institution-building perspectives that go beyond the expected lifetime of MINUSTAH are required and/or which fall outside the core tasks defined below." It also foresaw "a progressive transition of functions to national authorities, but also of provision of assistance by the Mission to international partners, both from within the United Nations Family and from among other bilateral and multilateral partners."¹⁵ The mission's components were streamlined, and a plan and timetable were developed for the handover of security responsibilities to Haitian institutions in low-risk regions. The consolidation plan also mentioned the development of a strategy to help UN partners mobilize resources.

The plan defined four core objectives in the following areas: police development, electoral capacity building, the rule of law and human rights, and governance. It also fixed benchmarks for each area, such as reaching a minimum strength of 15,000 police officers by 2016 (with no less than one-third stationed outside of the capital).¹⁶ Qualitative benchmarks included the development of "critical specialized capacity" for the police, the "ability of the police to effectively manage itself," and "advances" in the constitutional reform process. These benchmarks also included the establishment of a Permanent Electoral Council and of "functional" and "operational" accountability and oversight mechanisms such as the Superior Council of the Judiciary and Inspectorate General of the national police, though the document did not define "functional" or "operational."

The 2014 Revision of the Integrated Strategic Framework

In July 2014, MINUSTAH and the UN country team (UNCT) initiated consultations on transition planning. The 2013–2016 Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF, the interagency strategic planning document linking the mission with UN agencies,

¹⁴ The consolidation plan was developed by the mission's senior planner and the Office of the DSRSG. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2013/139, March 8, 2013, Annex "Consolidation Plan 2013-2016 for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti."

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

funds, and programs) seemed to be a convenient tool for planning the transition.¹⁷ As the UN policy on transitions acknowledges, “Missions may integrate transitions issues into existing planning tools, such as an Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) or, where required, initiate a specific transition planning process.”¹⁸ MINUSTAH’s leadership chose to use the mid-term revision of the ISF to start considering the transition and reconfiguration and to include the transition plan in this revision.¹⁹

UN headquarters deployed an expert to Port-au-Prince to help MINUSTAH’s and the UNCT’s strategic planning teams, including the office of the deputy special representative of the secretary-general (DSRSG) and the strategic planner from the office of the special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG). Together, they put the basic tools for the transition in place by setting up groups, breaking down the process step by step, and encouraging coordination meetings and retreats with UN agencies.²⁰ This clarified MINUSTAH’s tasks and activities with the UNCT and kick-started brainstorming about the handover.

In July 2014, MINUSTAH and the UNCT initiated a consultation process for transition planning. The transition was discussed in seven working groups, each representing one of the mission’s thematic work streams. A matrix was established to review each work stream and related objectives, break them down into the mission’s activities, and identify the partners envisioned to take over each activity after MINUSTAH’s departure.²¹ This matrix was seen as a tool for managing and monitoring the transition’s progress.

The DSRSG/resident coordinator/humanitarian

coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC) then facilitated a joint UNCT-MINUSTAH retreat in November 2014 to review the conclusions of the working groups and discuss a joint transition plan. Their discussion identified gaps for the transition, including the following: the correctional system, for which there was no clear partner to take over the support provided by MINUSTAH; the community violence reduction program, which required a specific transition strategy; and human rights monitoring and reporting, which risked decreasing even if the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) increased its presence and signed a memorandum of understanding with the government to set up a human rights office. Two retreats led to the production of draft documents and the beginning of a discussion with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) about a joint rule of law program, which was eventually established at the end of 2016.²²

The revised ISF for 2015–2016 was signed in May 2015. However, because the ISF was primarily a UNCT-owned document, it was ultimately not used by MINUSTAH, and the momentum created by this exercise and the matrix was not exploited. Instead, after months spent on revising the ISF, the leadership—including a new DSRSG/RC/HC, who arrived in May 2015—initiated a separate transition plan.

Attempts to Develop a Transition Plan

Instead of using the ISF, beginning in mid-2015, MINUSTAH’s planning team started working on a separate document for the transition.²³ As a former MINUSTAH staff member stated, “It was already done, and each time, we had to do it again.”²⁴ MINUSTAH’s planning teams sought to reconcile

17 There had already been an ISF after the earthquake for the period 2010–2011, extended until December 2012. UNDP, *UN Integrated Strategic Framework for Haiti 2010–2011*, available at www.undp.org/content/dam/haiti/docs/document-de-reference/Integrated%20Strategic%20Framework%20for%20Haiti%202010-2011.pdf.

18 UN DPKO/DFS Division for Policy, *Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal*, April 2, 2013.

19 The revision included a performance report for 2013: the review to consider new strategic directions, and a transition matrix.

20 There was not a clear forum to discuss common issues, according to people interviewed in Port-au-Prince in February 2018.

21 Creating the matrix consisted of reviewing each pillar and objective of the mission and breaking them down into different activities. For each of these activities, the matrix identified an appropriate timeframe, as well as the national entities, agencies, and partners envisioned to take over after MINUSTAH’s departure.

22 “As part of MINUSTAH’s phased transition process, on 8 November [2016], my Special Representative and the UNDP Country Director launched the United Nations joint interim rule of law programme involving MINUSTAH, UNDP, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), providing integrated support to the justice and human rights system.” UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/223, March 16, 2017.

23 The SRSG had tasked the DSRSG/RC/HC to be the main focal point for transition planning. A small task force was created that included the DSRSG, UNDP, the mission planner, and a transition expert.

24 Interview with former MINUSTAH staff member, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

the mission's regular results-based budgeting with the transitional arrangements and the 2014 matrix.²⁵ They produced tables on the substantive components of the transition, accompanied by short narratives defining the main area of concerns and assumptions guiding the transition.²⁶ Several versions of the transition plan were drafted, commented on, and disseminated, but they did not get final approval from the leadership or lead to an action plan. The teams tended to focus on producing a technical document—an aggregation of individual sections rather than an initiative driven by a clear vision from the top—and therefore on the processes involved in producing such a document (creating bureaucratic battles about who would own or be involved in the process).

In parallel, as part of MINUSTAH's efforts to mobilize resources, the UN, the Haitian government, and several partners launched a two-year appeal for humanitarian and development financing in March 2015 (known as “the transition appeal plan”), which was expected to shift from humanitarian aid to development.²⁷ However, the appeal did not have the expected results. The departure of the DSRSG/RC/HC and the subsequent reprioritization of electoral support, combined with donor fatigue, reportedly contributed to the derailment of the transition appeal plan.²⁸

A Wake-Up Call from New York: The Code Cable

Due to delays in the development of a transition plan at the field level, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in New York started to get involved in the transition process. On October 23, 2015, UN headquarters sent a code cable to MINUSTAH on “guidance on transition planning and strategic assessment” and made specific requests that it hoped would advance the

transition process.²⁹ The cable was sent a few days after the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2243, which explicitly affirmed the council's intention to consider the possible withdrawal of the mission and a transition possibly beginning in October 2016 (see Box 1).³⁰ As a senior UN official explained, “The code cable was a wake-up call.” Another UN representative also described it as a proactive attempt to revitalize the process: “The idea was to put muscle in the transition.”

Indeed, the cable clarified the process by providing concrete instructions and tasking, including the development of five tools:

- A transition plan, led by the DSRSG/RC/HC, that would include a resource mobilization strategy;
- A situational analysis, led by the mission's political affairs section;
- An institutional capacity analysis, led by the DSRSG/RC/HC, to review the capacity of national institutions;
- The establishment of a MINUSTAH-UNCT coordination structure; and
- An internal and external communication strategy, led by the director of mission support and the mission's communications and public information office.

At the end of 2015, the political affairs section was made responsible for leading the transition planning and was handed the various tools and documents that had already been produced. As a result, the style of documents changed, with a new narrative for transition planning. Propositions included a transition policy committee co-chaired by the prime minister and the SRSG to provide strategic direction, oversee planning, and monitor the transition. To ensure implementation and follow-up, a joint UN transition group at the operational level was also proposed. A joint transition task force was expected to implement the

25 Results-based budgeting is a form of reporting “which aligns core resources... to key tasks.” It serves the purpose of managing the relationship with the Fifth Committee “by providing the information that will make budget allocation decisions more transparent.” It identifies inputs and outcomes and, in this regard, is an important planning tool. See Cedric de Coning and Emery Brusset, “Towards a Comprehensive Results-Based Reporting and Performance Assessment Framework for UN Peacekeeping Operations,” Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2018.

26 Four assumptions guided the transition: stability continues, elections take place, the president and legislature are installed, and democratic space for the opposition is maintained.

27 MINUSTAH, *Transitional Appeal 2015/2016: Haiti*, March 2015.

28 UN OCHA, *Evaluation of Multi-year Planning*, February 2017, available at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/myp_evaluation_final_report_-_february_2017.pdf.

29 Code Cable CYH-257, “Guidance on Transition Planning and Strategic Assessment,” October 23, 2015.

30 UN Security Council Resolution 2243 (October 14, 2015), UN Doc. S/RES/2243.

decisions of the policy committee and joint transition group.

Despite the numerous transition-related documents already produced, the mission committed to developing the first draft of the transition plan, which was to be supported by several different processes, including a systematic mapping of partners and stakeholders, and to identifying transitional arrangements with the UNCT, the government, and other partners.³¹ The joint transition plan was to be informed and complemented by the tools mentioned in the code cable.³² The mission started listing national actors whose capacity it would assess and organized a retreat to discuss the plan with the UNCT in December 2015.

Facing questions on the technical methodology (e.g., how to do an “evaluation of national capacities”³³ or how to define “benchmarks”), the political affairs section ended up focusing on the situational analysis. The mission also finalized the institutional capacity assessment, which was expected to be the “bulk of the transition plan.”³⁴ Because the follow-on presence after MINUSTAH had not yet been decided on, the mission had to plan for three possible scenarios: a transfer to the UNCT, another peacekeeping mission, or a special political mission.

Linking the Transition to the UN Development Assistance Framework

The DSRSG/RC/HC eventually recommended coordinating transition planning with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the planning document of the UN development system. The UNDAF builds on the two previous ISFs (2010–2012 and 2013–2016) and was under development in 2016, at the same time as both MINUSTAH’s transition plan and the three-year

investment plan for the government’s Strategic Development Plan.

The 2017–2021 UNDAF is itself a transition document, as it provides long-term goals “to break the vicious circle of political and institutional instability.”³⁵ The UNDAF defined the following five priority areas: poverty reduction and promotion of decent employment; access to and use of quality basic social services; gender equality and protection; resilience; and governance. For each of these areas, one outcome was established.³⁶ Outcome 3 on human rights and Outcome 5 on the rule of law and governance were particularly relevant for MINUSTAH’s transition.

The UNDAF specifically refers to MINUSTAH’s transition, demonstrating the links made between both processes: “The UNDAF 2017–2021 reflects the elements of the MINUSTAH transition in its strategic choices. Based on the transition plan (under development), the activities that will be transferred to the agencies will be incorporated into the work plans and joint programs.”³⁷ Several interlocutors mentioned the decision to link the UNDAF and MINUSTAH’s transition as essential to making the transition cohesive. It provided the opportunity to consider long-term needs, including social factors.

In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew impacted the transition process, which had to be suspended for the humanitarian crisis response. As a result, MINUSTAH and the UNCT had to develop a series of processes and documents at the same time: the UNDAF, the transition plan, the humanitarian response plan, a post-disaster needs assessment, and the continued response to the cholera outbreak. This was described as a heavy burden for all agencies.

31 Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 17, 2018.

32 Those tools were: a situational analysis that included the identification of likely security risks and potential triggers and drivers of instability; an institutional capacity analysis; an internal communication strategy regarding retrenchment and mission liquidation; an external communication strategy; and a resource mobilization strategy.

33 The methodology was eventually established by the DSRSG’s office, based on “outils mondiaux.”

34 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2016/225, March 8, 2016.

35 UNDAF, “Haiti: United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2017–2021,” June 2017.

36 The respective outcomes are: (1) The population, particularly the most vulnerable, has equitable access to means of subsistence, to decent and green jobs and to productive resources to reduce poverty in all its dimensions, in a favorable and inclusive socio-economic and cultural environment; (2) The population, specifically the most vulnerable groups, has increased and equitable access and use of quality basic social services, in particular education and health for all; (3) Public institutions adopt and implement equity policies, prevention, recovery and protective measures against violence and discrimination based on human rights, for the benefit of vulnerable groups; (4) National, regional and local institutions, along with civil society strengthen sustainable management of natural resources and environment, territorial and population resilience, especially for the most vulnerable, to respond to natural disasters, to climate change and humanitarian crisis while ensuring continued sustainable development; and (5) Public institutions and civil society improve the rule of law and decentralization for good governance at all levels of decision-making.

37 UNDAF, “Haiti: United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2017–2021,” June 2017.

In parallel, elections quickly became the main concern and stole the mission's attention and energy. Widespread allegations of fraud by Haitian political and civil society actors and the need to organize a rerun of the first round of the 2015 presidential elections prompted a political crisis and the establishment of a provisional government.³⁸ The elections were delayed on several occasions, including due to Hurricane Matthew. After one year of provisional government, the inauguration of Jovenel Moïse as president on February 7, 2017, marked the restoration of constitutional order.³⁹

This context of political uncertainty and contestation forced MINUSTAH to remain focused on elections, good offices, and security, which posed structural challenges to its transition planning. Out of the four assumptions guiding the development of the transition plan, two relied on continued political stability (elections take place, and the president is installed) and proved to be unrealistic. The technical planning exercise had failed to thoroughly prepare the mission for such contingencies, and transition activities ended up being delayed and perpetually redefined.

The 2017 Strategic Assessment Mission

As a result of the delays, MINUSTAH eventually lost control over the transition process. "New York was getting nervous not receiving anything from the mission," a senior UN official remembered.⁴⁰ Several assessment missions from UN headquarters were deployed to Haiti to support the transition at various points in the process. DPKO notably conducted two strategic assessment missions, both led by Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous, in June 2016 and February 2017, demonstrating the high level of attention on the drawdown following the 2015 code cable. The strategic assessment mission deployed in February 2017 proved particularly important to determining the future of

MINUSTAH and accelerating the transition process.⁴¹

In the beginning of 2017, MINUSTAH teams were still in the process of producing a transition document with recommendations for a specific post-mission configuration. The visit of the strategic assessment mission to Haiti in February 2017 prompted them to adapt their work, and what MINUSTAH had been drafting as the transition plan became a background document to prepare the visit of the strategic assessment mission.⁴² The change of leadership, due to the departure of the DSRS/RC/HC in January 2017, had also recently led to a change of approach and narrative, pushing teams to adapt their work: "We basically reviewed the entire transition plan," noted one former MINUSTAH official.⁴³ Another recalled that "in the end, there were so many versions of the transition plan." The plan was initially based on the institutional capacity analysis, was then amended to integrate the mission's support component, was delayed by the devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew and the political crisis, and ultimately became a preparatory document for the strategic assessment mission. This strategic assessment mission eventually produced its own report, which served as the basis for another final version of the transition plan.

However, the document on which the MINUSTAH teams worked for months, drafting and re-drafting on several occasions, was "never used." According to one former MINUSTAH official, "It was approved by the DSRS and sent to the SRS and New York, and it basically stopped there. It was never endorsed by the SRS and never used by New York. We gave up doing a 'transition plan'—it ended up being an ex-post document with no managerial relevance and didn't drive the process."⁴⁴ Indeed, the report produced by the strategic assessment mission, with its own analysis

38 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2016/753, August 31, 2016.

39 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/223, March 16, 2017.

40 Interview, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

41 The secretary-general's March 2017 report (S/2017/223) highlighted the importance of finalizing and implementing the transition plan. "The development of a joint MINUSTAH and United Nations country team transition plan builds on the tangible results achieved by the completion of the Mission's consolidation plan at the end of 2016. The finalization and implementation of this transition plan must be rapidly achieved following the decision of the Security Council on a future United Nations presence and should be based on a shared vision between the United Nations family and the Government."

42 The secretary-general's August 2016 report (S/2016/753) mentioned that "MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team continued preparatory work on a joint transition plan."

43 Interview, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

44 Phone interview with former MINUSTAH staff member, March 2018.

and substantive recommendations, became the actual transition plan and informed the establishment of MINUJUSTH. The final decision was therefore made by teams in New York. As a former MINUSTAH staff member acknowledged, however, “We can complain, but it was dictated by HQ because they did not see things moving.”⁴⁵ Another shared this view: “To be fair, it was also because the mission did not have anything to offer.”⁴⁶

As echoed in the secretary-general’s report in March 2017, the main recommendation of the strategic assessment mission was to put in place a follow-on peacekeeping presence with a strong political role to reinforce the rule of law.⁴⁷ The report recognized “longstanding risks of instability caused by a combination of a culture of zero-sum politics, deep-rooted political polarization and mistrust, poor socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions and weak rule of law institutions and serious human rights challenges.” It concluded that “both the threat assessment and the assessment of national police capacities suggest the need for the provision of continuous operational support in parts of the country.” One of the reasons invoked against a complete withdrawal was the lessons learned from the past: “Such a strategy would reduce the possibility of a repetition of the failures of past transitions, such as the rapid decline of national police capacity, impartiality and credibility following the closing of the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Haiti in March 2000, which led to the ensuing electoral crisis and large-scale public unrest.”⁴⁸

In Search of a Strategic Vision

Many interlocutors interviewed for this report pointed out that the transition plan was overly focused on bureaucratic processes at the expense of the sound political vision needed. As acknowl-

edged by a former senior UN staff member working on the transition, the process was driven not by a coherent, long-term plan but by requests from headquarters: “The problem is that we would talk about ‘transition’ reactively, following a code cable or a question from New York, for example. Then we would organize a retreat, ad hoc meetings, and it would just die, without any follow-up.”⁴⁹ MINUSTAH mainly pursued its work as bureaucratic tasks, often following an explicit instruction about a technical output: “Each time [we received a request from New York], we would map all missions activities, country team activities, [and] state capacities.”⁵⁰

While there were many requests from New York, as well as extensive guidance provided by headquarters on the procedural and technical aspects of the transition,⁵¹ some interviewees complained about a lack of substantive guidance: “New York did not tell us what they wanted. They either said nothing or one thousand things. We needed a vision, someone to decide, to tell us to stop a certain thing at a certain time... but neither the Security Council, nor the SRSG, nor New York were ready to decide.”⁵² The council requested specific outputs, such as the development and updating of the consolidation plan and the refinement of benchmarks and indicators of progress from 2007 to 2009 or, in 2016, the finalization of the transition plan.⁵³ However, it did not specify what it expected from the transition. As a consequence, “circumstances in the country, views of the mission, and instructions from New York were evolving all the time.... We were trying to respond but it was not clear where we were going.”⁵⁴ From a headquarters perspective, however, transition planning—including the articulation of a strategic narrative around the transition process—should be led in the field rather

45 Interview, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

46 Interview, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2018.

47 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/223, March 16, 2017. The second important consideration is to ensure that the follow-on UN presence is able to exercise a strong political and good offices role, which remains crucial to enabling a stable political environment and accompanying Haiti toward further progress and reform priorities, in particular with regard to the rule of law and human rights.

48 Ibid.

49 Interview, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

50 Ibid.

51 Headquarters provided guidance and training on transition planning and facilitated two transition retreats in Haiti.

52 Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 18, 2018.

53 UN Security Council Resolution 2313 (October 13, 2016), UN Doc. S/RES/2313.

54 Interviews with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

than in UN headquarters, as stated by the UN transition policy. One UN official believed that “since colleagues on the ground know the substance best, they should take the technical and procedural guidance and add the substance.”⁵⁵

While the UN policy on transitions establishes that “planning for a UN transition is the joint responsibility of the UN leadership on the ground, working in close coordination with national partners, the UNCT and UNHQ,” unclear ownership of the transition in the field undermined the process. A series of changes in and miscommunication between senior mission leaders reportedly cramped their ability to meaningfully engage on the transition.⁵⁶ A task force composed of the mission’s strategic planner, the office of the DSRSG, and a transition specialist deployed by headquarters led the process in 2014, in coordination with UNDP. In 2015, responsibility was taken over by the DSRSG/RC/HC. At the end of 2015, the political affairs section was also assigned to take the lead on transition activities, and eventually focused on the situational analysis. Efforts to anchor the transition narrative in the UNDAF were subsequently driven by the DSRSG/RC/HC. His departure in early 2017 in the midst of the political and electoral crisis further hampered the mission’s efforts to organize the transition. The post remained vacant during the last nine months of MINUSTAH, and the other DSRSG took over leadership of the transition. The head of mission support also left the mission during the drawdown and was replaced, which reportedly had an impact on the continuity and effectiveness of the process.

As described by a UN expert, “The lack of leadership buy-in was an issue. This was partly due to the high turnover of DSRSG/RC/HCs—each wanting to have a different approach to transition planning and a different plan. As a result the planning process was inconsistent and never completed.”⁵⁷

As mentioned by a number of interviewees in Port-au-Prince, the transition phase calls for the utmost level of professionalism and expertise. In particular, the head of mission support and chief of staff are key to an effective transition: “These are two critical positions where high performers are needed.”⁵⁸ Several interlocutors raised the need for senior leadership to have specific skills and mindsets for shuttering a mission, pointing out the fundamental difference between running a mission and closing one.

Due to the lack of a clear strategic vision, the teams on the ground limited their initiatives to technical work, even though UN policy recognizes that “UN transitions are highly political processes.”⁵⁹ As stated by a UN official, “Discussing the process is always easier. We never talked about substance.”⁶⁰ With little to no concrete, substantive input at a strategic level or expertise on transition work, the transition remained a long, bureaucratic, and technical process. The teams “were trying to invent a process at a technical level without having the leadership telling [them] ‘this is what I want.’”⁶¹ Without a vision to guide them, several former staff regretted that the momentum they created through workshops or consultations led nowhere and that the whole exercise was a missed opportunity: “We were in advance, we had resources.”⁶² Challenges that could not be solved at the technical level—such as the need for a sound strategy to mobilize funding for the UNCT or the need for consultations with the government—remained unaddressed. The transition was largely reduced to a document that changed regularly and was treated as a box-ticking exercise for UN staff.

The mission also sometimes struggled to integrate different work streams in its documents and processes. The transition documents, from the ISF to the UNDAF to the transition plan, were all based on multiple institutional and situational assessments. This exhausted both mission and

55 Interview, New York, December 2018.

56 Phone interview with former MINUSTAH official, March 9, 2018. The role of interpersonal relations was mentioned by several interlocutors as a crucial factor for a successful transition. Good relationships at the operational level between the DSRSG and the mission strategic planner, for example, were reported to be critical to any success, and many interviewees speculated that things would have been worse had that good relationship not existed.

57 Interview with UN official, New York, December 13, 2018.

58 Interview with UN official, March 9, 2018.

59 UN DPKO/DFS Division for Policy, *Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal*, April 2, 2013.

60 Interviews with MINUJUSTH official Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

61 Interviews with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 17, 2018.

62 Interviews with MINUJUSTH official Port-au-Prince, 15 February 2018.

UNCT staff, who simultaneously had to deal with the humanitarian response plan, post-disaster needs assessment after Hurricane Matthew, and management of the cholera crisis. The UNCT grew frustrated by the multiple processes, meetings, and assessments—which were ultimately not used. As a MINUSTAH official remembered, “It has always been a painful process.... Coordination efforts did not lead to anything and exhausted everybody. People were planned out.”⁶³

As pointed out by several interviewees, the teams were not necessarily savvy in writing transition plans or identifying benchmarks. Despite existing policies and guidelines, they lacked the technical expertise to pursue an effective transition in the absence of clear leadership and a common mission-wide understanding of what it entailed. The mission also focused on “best practices.” UN staff therefore tended to replicate past transition experiences without properly accounting for the Haitian context. The transition plan for Timor-Leste, for example, was used (and, according to one interviewee, entirely copied) to draft MINUSTAH’s plan—“to the extent that our document used the same font.”⁶⁴ As a member of the UN mission stated, “We are an organization of best practices, copying and pasting what was done before.”⁶⁵

External factors such as natural disasters and national political crises also challenged the process of defining a clear strategic vision over the long run. The contested elections of October 2015, in particular, distracted MINUSTAH from the transition. As MINUSTAH’s main activities still related to the rule of law, police development, and elections, the mission was sidetracked by electoral support. “While all of this [the transition] was happening, the electoral process absorbed every soul in the mission,” and the leadership focused on the political turmoil.⁶⁶ This posed a challenge for

MINUSTAH’s transition, as the mission needed to be both responsive and connected to the local context and insulated enough from the day-to-day political dynamics so as not to be caught up in them. This need was reflected in dynamics at the Security Council, where France in particular was demanding a strategic assessment mission regardless of the electoral developments, while other member states wanted to align the mission with the national process.⁶⁷

The Police Component Driving Concrete Priorities

Because of the ineffectiveness of a process that remained technical and lacked a clear vision on the civilian component’s side, the transition was eventually mainly driven by the uniformed components. In particular, the police component had a clear vision for how to adapt its activities to better strengthen the Haitian National Police.

A transition plan for uniformed personnel was developed parallel to the civilian transition process. Beginning in 2012, the military component gradually handed over responsibility for security to formed police units (FPUs). By 2016, the military component was operating from two hubs: Cap-Haïtien and Port-au-Prince.⁶⁸ This concentration of the military presence was compensated for by the deployment of FPUs to the departments vacated by the force, which was described as “a transition model that has proved effective.”⁶⁹ In December 2016, a detailed transition plan for uniformed personnel was ready. Though the military component was reportedly pessimistic about what would happen if it completely withdrew,⁷⁰ it gradually organized the withdrawal of 2,370 troops during the last year of MINUSTAH (see Figure 2).⁷¹ This was “more streamlined [and] more professionally done” than the civilian transition plan, according to a former civilian staff member.

63 Interviews with MINUJUSTH official Port-au-Prince, 17 February 2018.

64 Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 17, 2018.

65 Interview with MINUJUSTH staff member, Port-au-Prince, February 17, 2018.

66 Phone interview with former MINUSTAH staff member, March 9, 2018.

67 The French in the Security Council advocated for the mission reconfiguration “not [to] be pushed back due to political stalemate.” Security Council Report, “Mandate Renewal of UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti,” October 12, 2016.

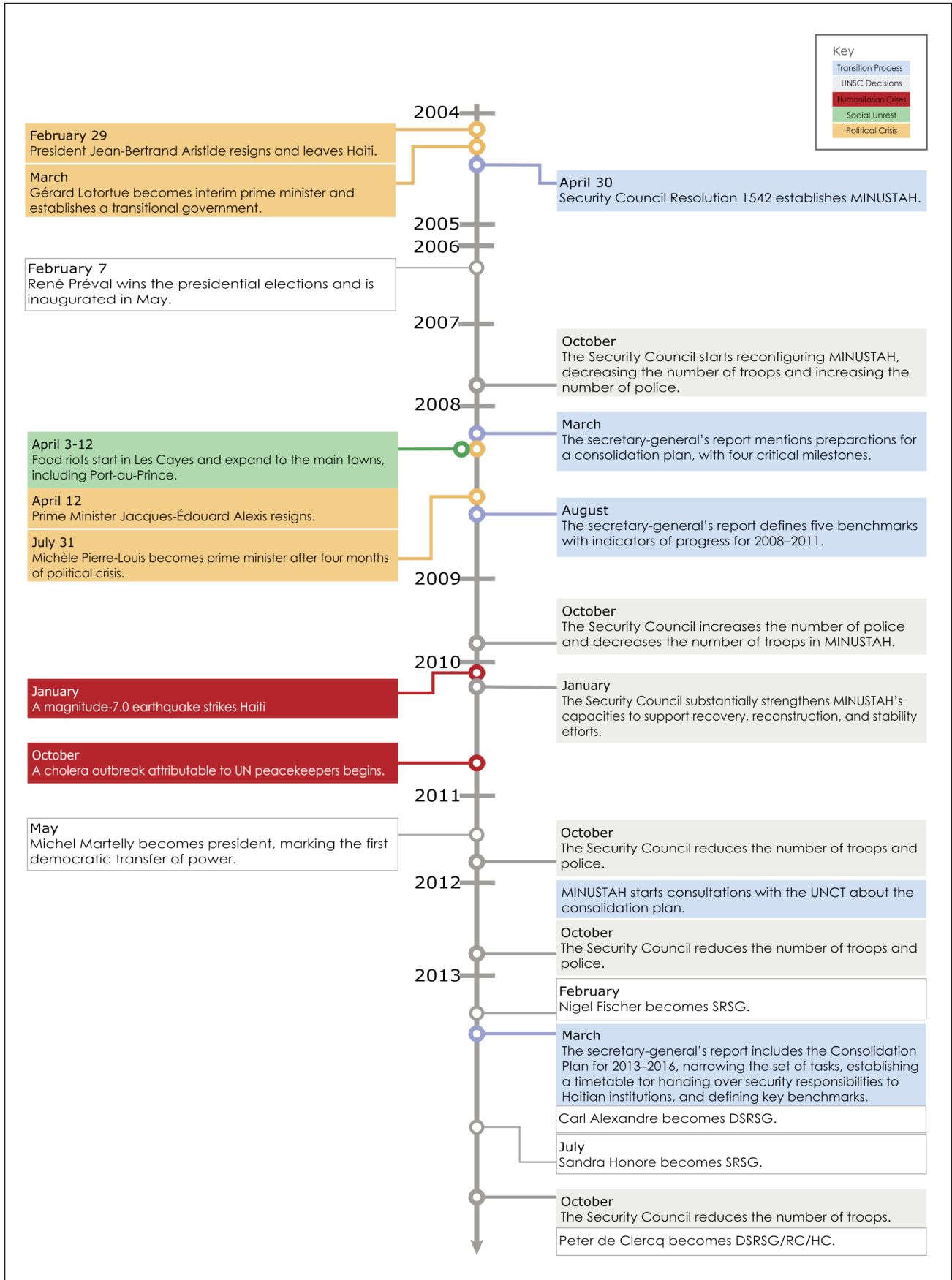
68 The transfer from the military component to FPUs started in four of the ten departments (South, Grand-Anse, Nippes, and North-West).

69 Interview with UN official, Port-au-Prince, February 18, 2018.

70 Interview with former MINUSTAH representative, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

71 As of March 2017, there were 2,370 military personnel.

Figure 1. Chronology of the UN transition in Haiti



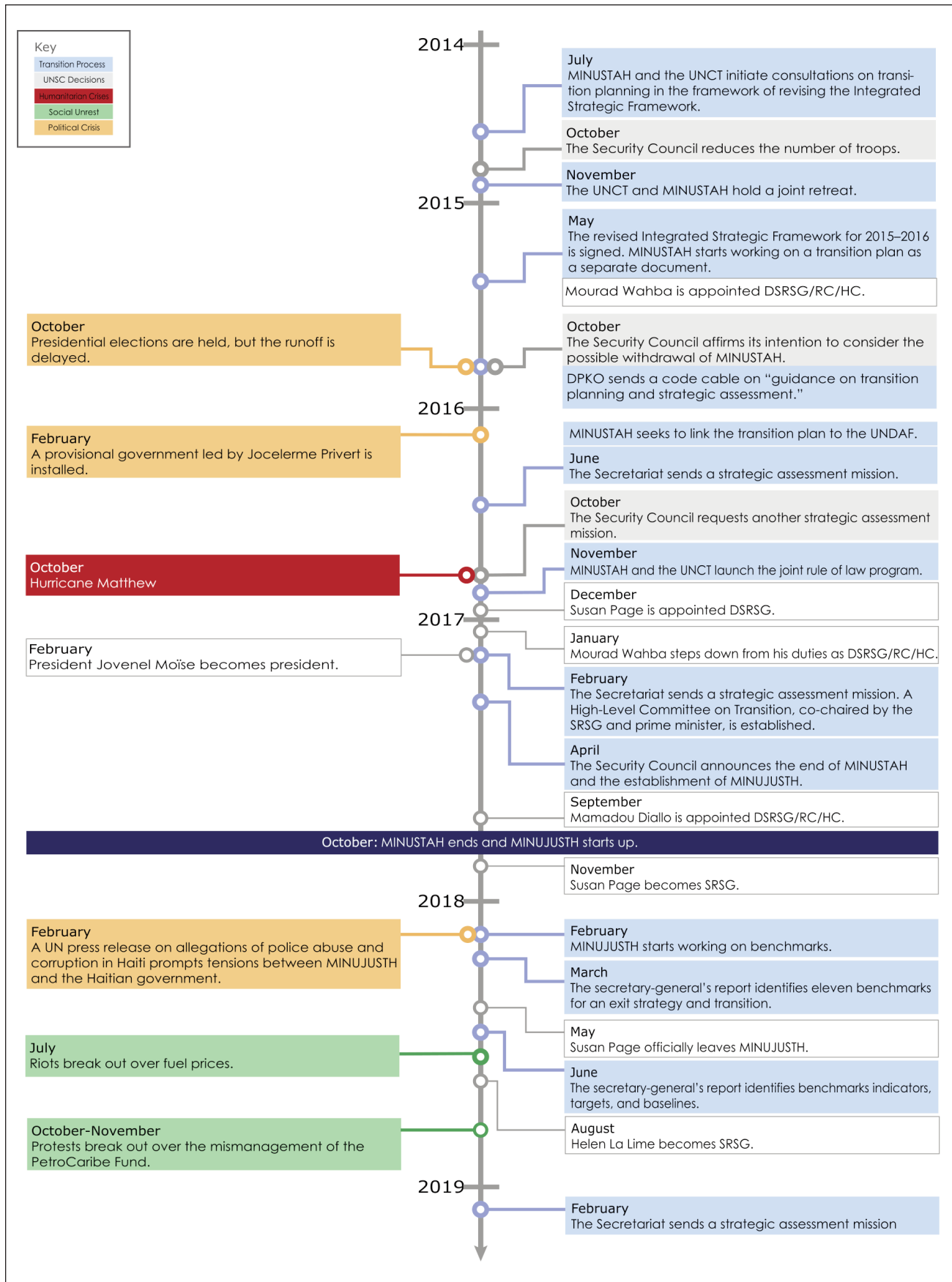
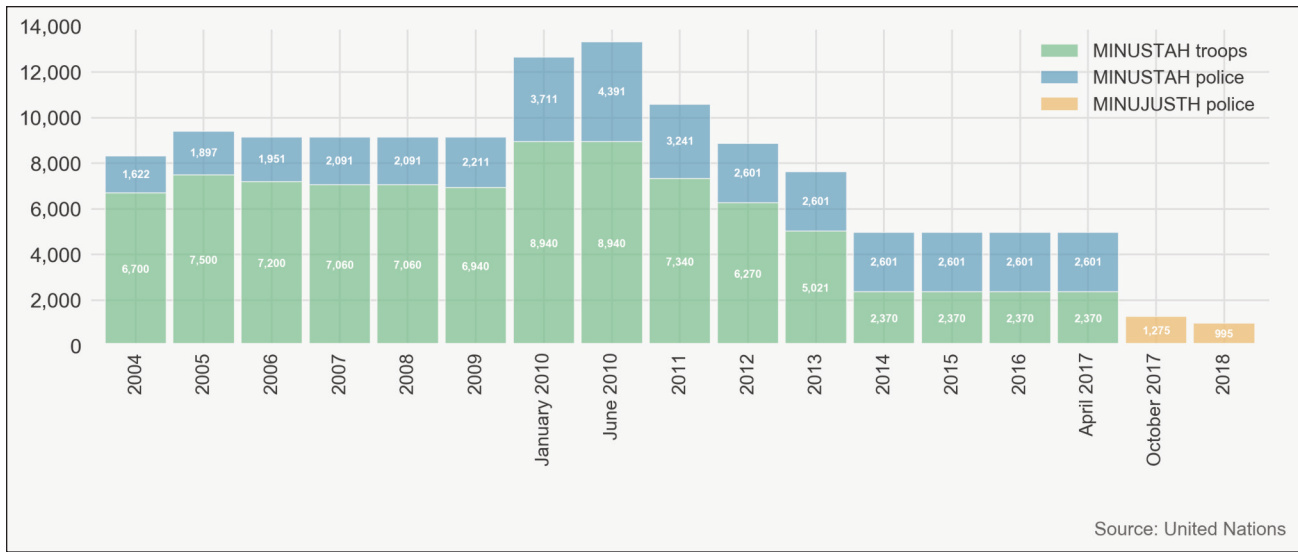


Figure 2. Authorized levels of UN troops and police in Haiti



On the police side, the drawdown was also methodically organized. Progressively, the FPU vacated some departments and were eventually located in only five,⁷² with the Haitian National Police deploying to the other departments. The police commissioner left in December 2015, and his post remained vacant until Brigadier General Georges-Pierre Monchotte took over in April 2016 and designed the transition for the police component. Consistency in the strategic planner position over a long period of time was also reported to be beneficial for this process.⁷³

UN police developed clear benchmarks that would have to be reached to justify the closure of the mission, such as reaching a total of 15,000 Haitian police. As of September 2017, the overall strength of the force had reached some 14,000 officers, and it was expected to reach 15,000 by December 2017.⁷⁴ Beyond the numbers, a new strategic vision for police support was also defined: “We were repeating capacity building at low levels, in a repetitive way, without any perspective and vision. We had to evolve,” explained a senior UN police officer.

The police commissioner’s vision for a reduced peacekeeping operation was therefore based on a change of concept for police capacity building,

focusing on oversight and management. UN police would shift from transferring capacity at the lowest levels (including joint patrols and collocating individual police officers with the Haitian police) to mentoring and advising at the highest levels. Instead of developing the capacities of the units themselves, the plan became to support the leadership and cadres of the Haitian National Police. UN police selected 150 directors, sub-directors, and special unit commanders to be mentored by 200 international police experts.

This approach was aligned with the Haitian National Police’s five-year development plan (2017–2021) and received support from the under-secretary-general for peacekeeping operations. The 2017 strategic assessment mission endorsed the approach, even while the civilian component was struggling to substantively define its own transition. At the same time, compared to areas such as the rule of law, progress for the police was easier to quantify and substantiate because there were specific numbers of police personnel recruited and police leaders mentored and a solid national police development plan providing the basis for concrete benchmarks. It thus seems that the police’s proposal was the only concrete transition plan MINUSTAH produced that then informed the

72 North, Grande Anse, Gonaïves, Nippes, and West.

73 Interview with UN official, New York, December 13, 2018.

74 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/840, October 5, 2017.

design of the follow-on mission MINUJUSTH.

Therefore, the police component's transition appeared to be smooth, transparent, and effective, without time lapses or gaps. The identification of 150 trainees and the recruitment of 205 individual police officers for the new mission was done by October 2017. "On October 16th, we were ready, and the others [had] just started working on what they should do," said one UN police officer. The police component's vision has since been the object of substantial interest from headquarters, which often cites it as a model for transitions: "People were relieved because the police had a proposal. We saved MINUJUSTH by providing something we could rely on, while the rest of the mission was frozen, in a total vacuum."⁷⁵

PURSUING INCLUSIVITY: AN INCONCLUSIVE CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH PARTNERS

For any transition, liaising with partners that will stay on the ground after the reconfiguration or withdrawal of a mission is essential. As indicated in the UN transition policy, "Planning for a UN transition is the joint responsibility of the UN leadership on the ground, working in close coordination with national partners, the UNCT and UNHQ." However, much of the transition planning remained internal, despite attempts to engage in consultations.

Technical Coordination with the UNCT

MINUSTAH began consolidation discussions with the UNCT in 2012, and they jointly developed the 2013–2016 Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF). A joint transition cell was also set up, consisting of the strategic planner, the resident coordinator's office, and a transition specialist temporarily deployed by headquarters. MINUSTAH and the country team established working groups to facilitate discussions on operational aspects of the transition, as there was, at that time, no institutionalized forum through which they could discuss common issues. The Integrated Mission Strategic

Policy Group, which brought together the UNCT, heads of substantive sections, and the DSRSG, was also considered a useful forum by the UN country team.⁷⁶

While joint whole-of-UN retreats enabled more focused conversation on substance, coordination was generally stronger at the technical than the strategic level. The presence of the SRSG in the country team's meetings remained ad hoc, and discussions focused on assets: access to the mission's radio station, the security configuration, transportation and air assets, and health facilities.⁷⁷ Issues related to strategic resource mobilization, however, were too little prioritized and followed up on. Similarly, the mission's interaction with member states remained stuck at a technical level, and it did not pay enough attention to potential donors for the UNCT or the future division of labor between bilateral and country team efforts.

In 2016, the mission and UNCT nevertheless established a joint rule of law program after months of planning to ensure the delivery of "coordinated and integrated priority activities and programmes."⁷⁸ MINUSTAH, UNDP, UNICEF, and UN Women engaged in joint programming to optimize UN resources and improve coherence among their activities. The mission and UNCT also started jointly implementing activities such as support to the legal assistance system and implementation of the community policing and community violence reduction plans. UNDP was able to mobilize funding under the joint rule of law program, which, according to one expert, "can be seen as having had catalytic effects."⁷⁹

However, both mission staff and the country team reportedly saw MINUSTAH as leading these activities, with the UNCT playing a technical and operational role. According to one UN official, "There is a mutual misconception of what we do. People are defensive and easily criticize the other side.... The country team sees the mission as a huge body superseding everything."⁸⁰ Many also

75 Interview with UN police official, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

76 Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2018.

77 Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2018.

78 See UNDP, UN Joint Interim Rule of Law Programme in Haiti, 2016–2017, available at https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/HTI/AWD97737_Haiti%20Joint%20RoL%20Programme_Signed%20Prodoc_14nov16.pdf.

79 Interview with UN official, New York, December 13, 2018.

80 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

questioned the inclusiveness of the process, because within the nineteen UN agencies, funds, and programs in Haiti, UNDP remained the main actor considered in transition planning discussions.⁸¹ At the same time, as mentioned above, the technical nature of the exercise, multiple delays, and the tendency to continuously work on different versions of documents exhausted the UNCT. A former MINUSTAH staff member remarked, “Agencies did not want to see us anymore.”⁸²

Minimal Consultation with the Host State

The UN transition policy notes that “the success of UN transitions hinges on national ownership, leadership and political will in the host country, which should be secured through high-level political engagement, as well as support from a broad and representative range of national stakeholders and other key national and local stakeholders in a dialogue on the transition process.” The Security Council, in its resolution on MINUSTAH in 2012, acknowledged the importance of concluding “a transition compact” with the government of Haiti to set out appropriate benchmarks.⁸³

Relations between MINUSTAH and the government of Haiti, however, were marked by long-term tensions. MINUSTAH was the object of regular criticism following sexual exploitation and abuse scandals, the cholera crisis, and general fatigue after thirteen years of peacekeeping. MINUSTAH’s credibility was particularly impacted by the UN’s delay in acknowledging responsibility for the cholera epidemic and lack of accountability for the damage caused. The government often used incendiary narratives to scapegoat MINUSTAH and galvanize popular discontent with the mission. MINUSTAH struggled to demonstrate its added value and to convince Haitians it was doing more good than harm. Beyond the “donor fatigue” often mentioned, this led to a “population fatigue” with the mission’s presence. The government was also strongly against the use of Chapter VII of the UN Charter to mandate the mission and against the

narrative that the situation in Haiti was a threat to “international peace and security.” The question of national sovereignty was stressed not only by the government but by all segments of Haitian society and the national media, making the population suspicious of any kind of UN presence.

MINUSTAH’s consultations with the government were also limited due to political uncertainty during the provisional administration, and one of the main challenges was that the government itself was in a transitional phase after contested elections and delayed results. “It is never good to engage with national institutions in this context,” explained a UN representative.⁸⁴ The SRSG presented the transition plan to the interim government and frontrunner candidates, and the institutional assessment included discussions with state representatives. The mission also planned to establish a transition policy committee co-chaired by the prime minister and SRSG at the end of 2015, but this was disrupted by the electoral crisis. Despite attempts to engage with state officials in this context, it was difficult to argue that the Haitian state had a meaningful stake in the transition while it was represented by a contested provisional government from February 2016 to February 2017.

After the return of the constitutional order, the inclusion of the Haitian state in the transition work remained limited due to the government’s lack of interest in substantively discussing the transition. As noted by a former MINUSTAH official, “There was no tension [between the mission and the government] since there was no interest at all in MINUJUSTH [from the government].”⁸⁵ Even when discussions were held, the government remained focused on negotiating the continuation of capacity-building activities to support state institutions, and handover of equipment and material assets instead of the political and strategic vision behind the transition: “The only interest that the government had in MINUSTAH’s closure was the question of assets.”⁸⁶ Indeed, President Moïse

81 Interview with UN agency official, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018

82 Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018

83 UN Security Council Resolution 2070 (October 12, 2012), UN Doc. S/RES/2070.

84 Phone interview with former MINUSTAH staff member, March 9, 2018.

85 Phone interview with former MINUSTAH staff member, March 9, 2018.

86 Ibid.

was reported to regularly ask about the handover of UN equipment to the government—which was mostly contingent-owned and therefore not transferable. The government’s requests for equipment for the new army became a bone of contention, since the UN was not willing to get involved in the reestablishment of the national army and pushed back.

The timing of the 2017 strategic assessment mission, requested “by the end of the current mandate and preferably after the inauguration of a newly elected president,” was also problematic.⁸⁷ The mission arrived in Haiti one day before the new president took office on February 7th. “We were not happy about the date of the [strategic assessment mission],” confessed a former MINUSTAH official, pointing to the lack of preparedness for constructive discussions with the host state.⁸⁸

As a result, discussions with national institutions were minimal. Transition planning largely remained an “internal exercise, even if [the mission says] it was inclusive because [it] organized a few meetings.”⁸⁹ Government representatives were generally not present in meetings on technical, financial, and strategic cooperation. A high-level committee on the transition, co-chaired by the SRSG and prime minister, was eventually created in February 2017, after the main decisions on the transition were already taken.

Limited Strategic Communication

The mission did not sufficiently undertake strategic communication about the transition, either internally or externally. Its strategic communications and public information section (and the office of the spokesperson) was reduced from 102 people in 2016 to 52 in early 2017 and to 20 by the end of MINUSTAH.⁹⁰ This lack of resources and capacities limited the ability of the mission to implement a sound and effective communication plan: “To create legacy, we should have communicated

more,” which was not possible due to the “violent cuts of means,” said one UN official.⁹¹ Eventually, headquarters also decided to stop the mission’s radio station, a crucial instrument for outreach and implementation of its mandate through dialogue and sensitization. The mission did not have a joint communication strategy with the UNCT for a long time, and its proposal for monthly joint press conferences with the nineteen agencies, funds, and programs did not materialize. As a consequence, the transition was covered negatively in the national press, which suggested that the UN was abandoning Haiti.⁹²

In addition, efforts focused on creating MINUSTAH’s legacy and building a narrative on the achievements of the mission. However, as a UN official stated, “Strategic communication in a transition process should be much broader than the legacy piece, focusing on the successes. It should also clearly focus on remaining challenges, bolster confidence in national institutions, and send a message that the UN will remain.”⁹³ This would have required strengthening resources for communication and public information activities instead of cutting these during the drawdown phase of the mission.

MOVING TOWARD CLOSURE: A POLITICAL DECISION MADE IN NEW YORK

The Security Council decided that the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) would come to an end in October 2017 and be replaced by the more narrowly focused UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). The Security Council requested MINUSTAH to “ensure a successful and responsible transition” to the new “follow-on peacekeeping mission.”⁹⁴ However, this decision was largely driven by political and institutional dynamics on the Security Council and at headquarters, and the mission was eventually sidelined in the transition process.

87 Security Council Resolution 2313 (October 13, 2016), UN Doc. S/RES/2313.

88 Phone interview with former MINUSTAH staff member, March 9, 2018.

89 Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

90 Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2018.

91 Interview with former MINUSTAH and current MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2018.

92 Interview with UN official, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2018.

93 Interview with UN official, New York, December 13, 2018.

94 Security Council Resolution 2350 (April 13, 2017), UN Doc. S/RES/2350.

The Decision for a Follow-on Mission: Political Dynamics and the Need to Rebrand

Ending MINUSTAH and launching MINUJUSTH in 2017 was a political decision made by the Security Council and was not necessarily based on needs and progress on the ground or aligned with the situation in the country. The final mandate reflected compromises among members of the Security Council and the “group of friends” on Haiti in New York (see Box 2).⁹⁵ France and the UK were early supporters of a substantial drawdown despite the political and electoral crisis. Beginning in 2015, France advocated for terminating MINUSTAH, at a time when its focus had shifted to the recently deployed missions in Mali and the Central African Republic.⁹⁶ Latin American countries on the council tended to remain wary of a military drawdown in light of the risks of instability.

As a compromise, after the drawdown of more than half of the troops in 2014, the Security Council kept the levels the same from 2014 to 2017 (see Figure 2). It also delayed the strategic assessment mission and the transition in view of the electoral crisis and security risks. However, in a context of increased scrutiny of peace operations and budget cuts at the UN, the council decided in 2016 to withdraw MINUSTAH as part of its efforts to demonstrate the performance of UN peacekeeping and the organization’s ability to close its missions. The decision also resulted from new dynamics in the council, with the new US administration calling for cuts in peacekeeping.⁹⁷

The Security Council decided on a new follow-on mission with a lighter footprint due to its members’ general perception that there was a need to rebrand

peacekeeping efforts in Haiti after thirteen years of MINUSTAH. With scars left by the cholera and sexual exploitation and abuse scandals and Haitians’ negative perceptions of MINUSTAH, both member states and DPKO planners saw it as essential to break from MINUSTAH’s controversial history and signal a change. “It was visceral,” said one official. “Cholera was attached to MINUSTAH. We needed to rebrand with fresher ideas and to change the focus of the mandate.”⁹⁸

Security Council Resolution 2350, adopted on April 13, 2017, therefore renewed MINUSTAH for a final period of six months and established MINUJUSTH for an initial period of six months. MINUJUSTH was designed as a new type of mission that had the potential to demonstrate the UN’s creativity in developing “tailor-made” operations while demonstrating continued commitment to Haiti. MINUJUSTH does not include military personnel, but only comprises a civilian component and a police component. The police component is composed of seven formed police units (FPUs, down from MINUSTAH’s eleven), for a total of 980 personnel deployed to five regional departments to support the Haitian National Police, as well as 295 individual police officers (reduced from MINUSTAH’s 1,001).⁹⁹ The withdrawal of the military component was a visible change, demonstrating that “there was no longer a need for blue helmets.”¹⁰⁰

MINUJUSTH is mandated to strengthen rule of law institutions in the country, support and develop the Haitian National Police, and engage in human rights monitoring, reporting and analysis.¹⁰¹ Despite its reduced means, MINUJUSTH is authorized to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate to support and

95 In 2015, the group of friends included Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Guatemala, Peru, the United States, and Uruguay.

96 Security Council Report, “October 2015 Monthly Forecast: Haiti,” October 1, 2015, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2015-10/haiti_8.php.

97 Since 2017, the US administration has championed the idea of higher-performing peacekeeping missions and criticized long-lasting missions failing to achieve their mandate, which has triggered increasing scrutiny of UN peace operations. The closure of the thirteen-year mission in Haiti was reported as one of the first efforts to significantly reduce the peacekeeping budget and, for other council members, to compromise with the United States’ calls to reduce the UN’s footprint in the field. The US State Department made clear that Haiti was a model for peacekeeping transitions: “The United States believes the transition from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH can serve as a model for how UN peacekeeping missions should adapt as a country’s needs change and its political situation evolves.” Heather Nauert, “UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH),” press statement, October 16, 2017, available at www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/10/274830.htm.

98 Interview with member-state representative, New York, February 6, 2018.

99 Compared with MINUSTAH, MINUJUSTH was reduced from eleven to seven formed police units, from 1,001 to 295 individual police officers, and from fifty government-provided corrections personnel to thirty-eight for the police component.

100 Interview with representative of a Security Council member, New York, February 6, 2018.

101 Security Council Resolution 2350 (April 13, 2017), UN Doc. S/RES/2350.

develop the Haitian National Police and to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. The head of MINUJUSTH also has a political role providing good offices and conducting advocacy. The Security Council also mentioned in its resolution that the “rule of law efforts of MINUJUSTH,” including community violence reduction and quick impact projects, would “be part of a strategy towards a continued,

progressive transition to development actors.”

The Security Council decided on a two-year timeframe leading to the eventual withdrawal of the peacekeeping mission. While mainly motivated by financial and political agendas, that timeframe was also based on the plan suggested by MINUSTAH’s police component, which defined two years as the time needed to put in place a viable and robust national police force.

Box 2. The Security Council Dynamics behind Resolution 2350

Resolution 2350 established MINUJUSTH. It was negotiated among the member-state group of friends on Haiti at UN headquarters in New York City. These member states did not strongly push back on the six-month renewal of MINUSTAH but rather negotiated the humanitarian, human rights, and peacebuilding language. In particular, France and the US reportedly opposed language on cholera, while Latin American countries insisted on mentioning the humanitarian and human rights challenges and peacebuilding.¹⁰² The US administration worked especially hard to remove the cholera response from the peacekeeping operation’s mandate, as it opposed the possible use of mission funding for this work. Given MINUSTAH’s responsibility for the cholera outbreak, removing the cholera response from the mission’s mandate was easier to advocate for with the establishment of a new mission, presented as a brand new operation. France, the UK, and the US therefore pushed to separate the new mission’s mandate from the cholera response at a moment when the secretary-general was launching the UN Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

Negotiations among council members particularly focused on the two-year timeframe and the question of a Chapter VII mandate. The UK proposed language requesting the secretary-general to develop an exit strategy to be implemented within a two-year timeframe. Some members resisted the establishment of a fixed timeline, concerned about withdrawing peacekeepers too soon. The US, while willing to end peacekeeping in Haiti soon, was also careful about rushing such an exit given the country’s mottled history of peace operations closing and opening since the 1990s. As a compromise, the resolution mentioned “a projected two-year timeframe” and requested “a well-developed and clearly benchmarked projected two-year exit strategy to a non-peacekeeping United Nations presence in Haiti.” While Russia and China questioned the need for a continued peacekeeping presence in the country, they did not strongly object to the establishment of MINUJUSTH, being satisfied with the prospects for an exit strategy.

The other point of contention was the Russian proposal to exclude human rights tasks from the Chapter VII mandate, as they had been for MINUSTAH.¹⁰³ As a result of this proposal, the authorization to use all necessary means only applies to support for the Haitian National Police and the protection of civilians.

Protection of civilians itself was an important piece of the negotiations, especially for a mission deployed without a military component. As explained by a representative of one of the permanent council members, the rationale for keeping the protection mandate “within [the mission’s] capabilities and areas of deployment” was “to avoid situations where the mission could do something and would not.” The FPU component, specifically, was designed as a safeguard and an “added layer of protection” to assist the Haitian National Police and respond to potential security issues.

102 Security Council Report, “April 2017 Monthly Forecast: Haiti,” March 31, 2017, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-04/haiti_11.php.

103 Security Council Report, “Haiti: Renewal of UN Mission’s Mandate for a Final Six-Month Period,” April 12, 2017.

Sidelining the Field Mission in Pursuit of a Clear-Cut Break

While the Security Council decided to establish MINUJUSTH, the Secretariat took the lead in conceptualizing the new peacekeeping operation without involving the mission. The UN policy on transitions recognizes that “when it becomes apparent that a UN transition will lead to the establishment of a new mission, discussion should begin immediately among the headquarters offices concerned” and that “the lead department must take on the responsibility to lead the planning for the configuration of the new UN mission prior to mission withdrawal.”

In the case of Haiti, however, the Secretariat completely excluded MINUSTAH’s civilian staff from the design of MINUJUSTH both before and after the passage of Resolution 2350. This triggered a number of internal battles. New York planners in the Integrated Operational Team, and more generally in DPKO and the Department of Field Support (DFS), eventually led the process. Due to the lack of vision emanating from the field, as described above, headquarters teams decided to create the transition narrative themselves.¹⁰⁴

MINUSTAH staff were instructed to focus on “closing MINUSTAH,” while headquarters would “open MINUJUSTH.”¹⁰⁵ “It was made clear that MINUSTAH’s closure will be managed by the SRSG, and MINUJUSTH will be handled by HQ, including for staffing, planning, everything,” remembered one staff member. MINUJUSTH’s personnel levels, structure, and activities were all out of the control of the field. There was no joint planning team, but instead ad hoc, informal, bilateral discussions between headquarters and individuals from MINUSTAH. Some interlocutors from the field complained that the organizational chart of MINUJUSTH and the number of personnel at each level were “not driven by needs but by artificial quotas.” Headquarters also defined results-based budgeting indicators without coordinating with field teams, which led to a misalignment between needs and budget allocations.

This division of labor also undermined strategic communication and continuity between the two missions. A clear rupture with MINUSTAH was the main objective that led all decisions about how to organize the transition. For example, social media accounts related to MINUSTAH were closed instead of being transferred to MINUJUSTH. “We would have liked [to keep] followers, but New York teams prioritized discontinuity in order to demonstrate that [each] mission [was] different,” said one staff member.¹⁰⁶

THE PITFALLS OF MISSION SUPPORT DURING THE TRANSITION

As much as closing a thirteen-year-old peacekeeping mission is a substantive, political project that needs to be led by a solid strategic vision, it is also a labor-intensive and time-consuming logistical endeavor. Liquidation encompasses staff management and the phasing out of human resources, asset disposal, environmental management, procurement, camp management, record management, and archiving. From this perspective, the transition was rushed and chaotic, despite the time MINUSTAH seemingly had to prepare. On their side, the military and police components planned their drawdown with specific numbers of personnel to be withdrawn by certain dates. On the civilian side, however, mission support challenges, including the liquidation of material assets and the management of human resources, were sources of frustration.

Discussions only addressed mission support late in the transition (in 2016), and even then support challenges were underestimated. Leadership and planning teams’ lack of engagement with mission support—due to their greater focus on the political and technical aspects of the transition—triggered delays that damaged the process. “We didn’t want to take decisions, so decisions were made too late,” explained one former MINUSTAH staff member. “We should have started working with support earlier.”¹⁰⁷ Mission staff were also used to announcements of logistical restructurings that never materialized. For example, discussions on the

¹⁰⁴ Interview with UN official, New York, March 2, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with MINUJUSTH senior official, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Interview, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 17, 2018.

closure of the Delta Camp in Port-au-Prince reportedly started in 2013, but the camp is still in use today.

The Burden of Liquidating a Thirteen-Year-Old, Multidimensional Mission

The UN manual on liquidation highlights that “generally, the single most complex and time-consuming task in the liquidation of a mission is the disposal of UN-owned assets.”¹⁰⁸ Given its importance, the support component needed to be strengthened, not reduced. However, both the teams on the ground and planners at headquarters underestimated the amount of work required to liquidate MINUSTAH.

Following Security Council Resolution 2350, the liquidation was given six months—an insufficient amount of time to handle thirteen years of accumulated assets and equipment that had not been reliably inventoried. The experience of the transition in Côte d’Ivoire, where the liquidation was reduced to three months instead of the traditional six-month period, contributed to making “member states assume that a liquidation can be completed in three months.” UN officials at the Secretariat and in the field described such a timeframe as overly ambitious and risky, as “rushing liquidation processes often creates organizational risks and costs rather than savings.”¹⁰⁹

MINUSTAH faced particular challenges managing material assets. An asset disposal plan is generally put together according to administrative rules when a mission closes. Assets are classified in five groups depending on their condition and potential future use (e.g., being sent to other peace operations or UN entities, commercially sold, or transferred to the host government).¹¹⁰ However, the task proved to be particularly difficult due to the sheer volume accumulated over thirteen years,

such as equipment for cars the mission did not have any more or containers full of soap that had been provided in the aftermath of the earthquake. A team of liquidation experts from the UN Logistics Base in Brindisi was deployed to Haiti for a few weeks to assist MINUSTAH in inventorying and disposing of assets and to better guide the mission about which assets could be useful for other missions. However, this was not sufficient to absorb the mass of accounting, classification, and disposal work facing the mission, and the logistics base team was reportedly not welcomed by all the mission’s staff, for whom liquidation was a painful process.¹¹¹

The main challenge for both the MINUSTAH and logistics base teams was the lack of available records of the assets, which MINUSTAH had failed to properly keep. Inventories were incomplete due to lack of handover, missing reports and records of lost or broken computers, and a tendency to rely on the computer systems Galileo and Umoja instead of regularly physically verifying the assets. Moreover, management of assets had been assessed by quantitative indicators (the number of containers, for example), which said little about the actual state of affairs. As a consequence, hundreds of containers were reportedly discovered to have been lost (950 according to one UN staff member), while unknown buildings and facilities—including a swimming pool—were discovered to belong to MINUSTAH but had not been properly inventoried. Structural mismanagement appeared to have been covered up for years.

While missions are expected to close cases, records, and inspections before December 31st each year, many issues in MINUSTAH had been pending for years and had to be dealt with in the last six months of the mission. “We discovered the skeletons in the closet,” noted an official from UN

108 See DFS, *Liquidation Manual*, 2012.

109 Interview with UN official in New York, December 13, 2018.

110 Group I: Equipment in good condition that conforms to established standardization or is considered compatible with existing equipment will be redeployed to other peacekeeping operations or will be placed in reserve to form start-up kits for use by future missions. Group II: Equipment not required for current or future peacekeeping operations may be redeployed to other United Nations activities funded from assessed contributions, provided that there is a demonstrated need for the equipment. Group III: Equipment not required for current or future peacekeeping operations or other United Nations activities funded from assessed contributions but which may be useful for the operations of other United Nations entities. Group IV: Any equipment or property not required or which is not feasible to dispose of in accordance with [UN rules] or which is in poor condition will be subject to commercial disposal in accordance with the procedures applicable to other United Nations equipment or property. Group V: Any assets which have been installed in a country and which, if dismantled would set back the rehabilitation of that country shall be provided to the duly recognized Government of that country in return for compensation in a form to be agreed by the Organization and the Government. This refers in particular to airfield installations and equipment. Where such assets cannot be disposed of in this manner or otherwise, they will be contributed free of charge to the Government of the country concerned. Such contributions require the prior approval of the General Assembly.

111 Interview with DPKO official, New York, March 8, 2018.

headquarters.¹¹² Retrieving the contracts and rental agreements was a challenge for a mission that had used verbal agreements in some instances and did not regularize its records. As explained by a DPKO representative, “We understand that when the mission is settling in there is no time to fully complete administrative tasks, as the arrival of a mission can be messy. All these long-lasting missions had these issues at the beginning, but [MINUSTAH] should have regularized [pending processes at a later stage].” MINUSTAH had not systematically followed legal and procurement standards when first established, which was only discovered at the closure of the mission: “The mission was not ready,” said one DPKO official.¹¹³

In addition to incomplete asset records, the transition also suffered from backlogs in MINUSTAH’s finances. Some contracts had not been honored for months—including contracts with national media. Many administrative decisions were also pending, with cases having remained open past December 31st each year and investigations from boards of inquiry having lasted several years without ever being concluded. According to UN representatives, fourteen inquiries were still pending at the closure of MINUSTAH, and two conduct and discipline cases were still in the investigative process in July 2018.¹¹⁴ From a human resources perspective, hundreds of staff had been waiting for their pension since 2016, and consultants were still waiting to be paid for services delivered years before.¹¹⁵

Unlike the mission in Chad, for example, which had to leave on short notice at the request of the government, the UN mission in Haiti had extensive time to plan for its departure and therefore had no excuse to abandon equipment and leave its camps without cleaning them up and putting things in order. However, MINUSTAH’s liquidation was not achieved by the closure of the mission on October 17, 2017. Instead, MINUJUSTH teams had to

continue working on the liquidation of its predecessor mission upon their arrival in the country.

Managing Despair: The Impact of the Human Resources Transition on Staff Morale

The management of human resources was a recurrent issue mentioned by former MINUSTAH staff interviewed about the transition. Before being a peacekeeping transition, the shift from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH was, for staff, a personal transition. “For them, the transition is their personal transition, and they felt mistreated by HR. It has really tainted the transition,” recalled a UN staff member.¹¹⁶ To pursue a clear rupture with MINUSTAH, UN headquarters decided to fully staff MINUJUSTH with new hires. The rationale was to get rid of the least motivated staff and get new blood to implement a new concept and a new mandate in a more dynamic way. “We did not want people to think it was business as usual,” explained a DPKO official.¹¹⁷

MINUSTAH staff were advised that they would not be automatically transferred to the new mission and that everybody would be dismissed at the closure of MINUSTAH. All positions for MINUJUSTH would be advertised, and while MINUSTAH personnel were not prevented from applying, they were not guaranteed to be rehired. Most of the recruitment was done from rosters, meaning that only “rostered candidates” who had been pre-approved and placed in relevant databases could apply. While this is a regular process for field missions—and the roster system was initially meant to facilitate and speed up recruitment—it de facto excluded many MINUSTAH staff who had served in Haiti for several years and had never been rostered.¹¹⁸ Others were denied lateral reassignment after requesting it through the UN’s Cosmos system, which requires verification of credentials and diplomas. As a UN

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.; Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, July 5, 2018.

115 Interview with UN officials, New York, March 8, 2018; interviews with UN officials, Port-au-Prince, February 13–16, 2018.

116 Interview with MINUJUSTH staff member, February 15, 2018.

117 Interview with DPKO official, New York, March 8, 2018.

118 To be rostered, applicants must apply to generic job openings designed to populate specific rosters for specific functions and levels. There is no process whereby qualified internal staff are automatically rostered. A number of MINUSTAH staff, who were recruited before the establishment of the roster system, never applied to such rostering exercises and, while being in their posts for years, were not in the rosters corresponding to their function. See also: Namie Di Razza, “People before Process: Humanizing the HR System for UN Peace Operations,” International Peace Institute, October 2017.

official from DPKO explained, “MINUSTAH had a record number of staff whose diplomas had never been verified.”¹¹⁹

Nonetheless, due to a lack of effective internal communication, many staff, including some who had been with MINUSTAH since the beginning of the mission in 2004, remained convinced they would be transferred or that the mission would stay, despite announcements made to the contrary. When it eventually became increasingly clear that they were about to lose their jobs, complaints multiplied.

While human resources teams tried to relocate staff to other missions, this was easier for support staff than for substantive staff. As one UN staff member described, “It is easy to transfer a transport officer, but... we had [substantive staff] whose competencies were not useful for other missions, [and we] pushed other missions to take them.”¹²⁰ The drawdown also unfolded at a time when two other missions were drawing down, and the capacity of other missions to absorb additional staff was greatly reduced. Even when those missions could take additional staff, “people did not necessarily want to go to Kidal [a hardship duty station in Mali].”¹²¹ Many staff had built their life in Haiti for years and were emotionally attached to the mission and the country.

As a result, MINUSTAH suffered from a toxic atmosphere among staff in its final months. Low morale led to internal fights over and competition for potential posts, hampering team cohesion and negatively impacting the mission’s overall performance. “People stopped working,” recalled several employees, and from 2016 “there was no mission anymore” as “everybody was worried about the future.”¹²² As a DPKO official stated, “We were facing people in a state of despair.”¹²³ Demoralized

staff were consumed by the management of their individual careers, spending their time applying for other jobs. Others were constantly in a “defensive” posture, trying to build legal cases against the UN. According to the same official, “Even at the director level, some locked themselves in their office to build their MEU [management evaluation unit] cases. People were ready to use any administrative trick to gain a few weeks. Loyalty stops when your future is at stake.”¹²⁴

A related issue was the disempowerment of MINUSTAH personnel during the whole transition process. As described above, they were sidelined from the design of MINUJUSTH and felt blamed for MINUSTAH’s flaws and failures. Several interlocutors reported that headquarters seemed to perceived MINUSTAH personnel as inept or incompetent. For one staff member, “The new mission was viewed as a way to ‘clean house,’ but things went too far.”¹²⁵ “They threw the baby out with the bath water,” said another.¹²⁶ In his code cable announcing that staff from closing missions would be supported for relocation, the under-secretary-general for field support reportedly did not mention MINUSTAH, despite mentioning MINUJUSTH as a new mission that could receive new staff. Some MINUSTAH personnel perceived the cable negatively and reported feeling ignored by headquarters.¹²⁷

Developments during the final weeks and days of MINUSTAH further aggravated frustration. In September 2017, once month before MINUJUSTH was expected to start, member states, including the US, voiced concerns about staffing. Nobody was in place, there was no approved staffing table, and the whole transition seemed chaotic. According to former MINUSTAH officials, the staffing table was only communicated in September 2017, which was too late and complicated workforce planning.¹²⁸

119 Interview with DPKO official New York, March 8, 2018.

120 Interview, Port-au-Prince, February 14, 2018.

121 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, February 14, 2018.

122 Interviews in Port-au-Prince, February 9-15, 2018.

123 Interview with UN official, New York, March 8, 2018.

124 A number of separated or relocated staff filed for litigation with the Management Evaluation Unit (MEU). Interview with MINUJUSTH official, February 14, 2018; interview with DPKO official, March 8, 2018.

125 Interview with UN official, February 15, 2018.

126 Interview with former MINUSTAH and current MINUJUSTH official, February 16, 2018.

127 Interview with former MINUSTAH official, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2018.

128 The staffing structure is described in: UN General Assembly, *Budget for the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti for the Period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018*, UN Doc. A/72/560, October 20, 2017. According to two former MINUSTAH staff interviewed in Port-au-Prince on February 15 and 16, 2018, the staffing structure was only communicated to the mission in September.

At the last minute, the UN eventually offered former MINUSTAH staff positions in MINUJUSTH. A total of fifty-one MINUSTAH staff were extended for a period of 1.5 to 2.5 months and were informed of this just ten days before the closing of the mission.¹²⁹ Some were reported to be ready with their luggage to leave Haiti when they were notified of being retained in the new mission.¹³⁰ Others had already been let go and left but were invited to return—at significant cost to the UN, given the severance packages and subsequent relocation allowances. The eventual retention of staff led to bittersweet feelings and further lowered the morale of both international and national staff who felt they had been ill-treated. As a UN official explained, “The SRSG wanted staff to have a friendly closure. She left with a heavy heart.”¹³¹

Managing MINUJUSTH: The Existential Dilemmas of a Transition Mission

Beyond the complications of closing MINUSTAH, the establishment of MINUJUSTH was accompanied by organizational challenges. These were mainly due to its dual identity as both a startup mission and a closing mission, its broad, substantive mandate despite having a small footprint and short timeframe, and uncertainties around its new approach and exit modalities.

A MISSION AT BOTH ENDS OF A TRANSITION PROCESS

MINUJUSTH has found itself at both ends of the transition process, simultaneously taking over from MINUSTAH and preparing to hand over to other stakeholders in a two-year timeframe. As a consequence, it seems that MINUJUSTH is torn between two sets of objectives and two rationales for its potential activities. On the one hand, MINUJUSTH is a new mission in the sense that it has had to set its own strategy, start new types of activities, and use a different *modus operandi*. On the other hand, it is also a closing mission with a short timeframe of two years (in principle) before

its withdrawal. Among staff interviewed, the dilemma posed by this double identity was omnipresent: “Is the transition done or are we in transition?” asked one staff member. This constant hesitation between opening or liquidating, continuing or starting over, maintaining or innovating, and pursuing technical or substantive objectives has deeply affected the work of the mission.

Substantive Challenges: Reduced Means for Ambitious Objectives

As a new mission, MINUJUSTH spent a lot of time defining its position, strategy, and methodology of work. In the first months of the mission, it needed to dedicate much of its attention and resources to recruitment, discussions of strategy, and basic operational activities including the definition of work plans, specific coordination processes, and the frequency of reporting. The mission therefore spent most of its first year in “soul-searching mode,” defining its *raison d’être* and approach.¹³²

The conventional understanding is that it takes around six months for a new mission to be fully operational and six months for it to liquidate—which would mean MINUJUSTH would only be at maximum capacity to deliver its mandate for one year. However, MINUJUSTH was expected to be operational from the outset—a rare expectation for a peacekeeping operation. In this demanding context, the mission faced three main challenges to establishing a balanced strategy: reconciling institutional memory with institutional change, balancing a short lifespan with ambitious objectives, and blending transition planning with substantive work.

Institutional Memory versus Institutional Change

MINUJUSTH is both a successor and inheritor of MINUSTAH’s results, achievements, and failures and an initiator of a renewed strategy. As a consequence, it needs to ensure both institutional memory and sufficient institutional change. Keeping a mix of new and old staff has often been described as the best way to do this in transitions between two peacekeeping missions. For

129 Interview with UN official, December 10, 2018.

130 Interviews with former MINUSTAH and current MINUJUSTH staff member, Port-au-Prince, February 2018.

131 Phone interview with former MINUSTAH official, March 9, 2018.

132 Interview with UN headquarters official, New York, March 2, 2018.

MINUJUSTH, it appears that the key mistake was replacing the bulk of the working-level staff while keeping most of the leadership in place instead of doing the reverse.

Leadership mostly remained the same: MINUSTAH's police commissioner stayed on for several months, its chief of human rights remained in place, and its DSRSG during the final months, Susan Page, became the SRSG. A number of MINUSTAH's directors and heads of sections were also rehired. In addition, MINUJUSTH had the same spokesperson as MINUSTAH, and some raised concerns about not changing the "face of the mission." Changing the name while keeping leaders who had served with MINUSTAH was not enough to signal the change of direction sought by the Security Council and Secretariat.

At the working level, however, MINUJUSTH hired many new staff. While the political and rule of law service rehired a number of former MINUSTAH personnel at the P3 to P5 levels, all international staff in the human rights service—except its director—were new and lacked previous experience in Haiti. The replacement of civilian personnel from MINUSTAH with substantial experience and knowledge of Haitian social and political dynamics triggered a loss of institutional memory. This has slowed down the mission's start-up and undermined its ability to design work plans and strategies tailored to and informed by the local context. As a national staff member explained, new staff "have more energy and motivation but less knowledge of the system." That same staff member continued, "They ask questions like, 'What is a government commissioner?' and I need to explain the most basic things all day long." The unpreparedness of staff and their lack of familiarity with lessons learned from MINUSTAH have disrupted operations and caused some duplication of efforts: "We are reinventing the wheel," said a former MINUSTAH and current MINUJUSTH staff member. "We are doing assessments and evaluations on things we used to know."¹³³

Carefully choosing the posts for which institutional memory is necessary and those requiring new profiles to signal change, and then carefully tailoring each of these profiles to the needs of the

mission, could have allowed MINUJUSTH to hit the ground running. Instead, the UN both stripped the change it announced of credibility by keeping leaders in place and lost knowledge and expertise by replacing working-level staff in substantive components.

In cases where hiring new teams was necessary, ensuring proper handover, training, and transfer of lessons learned from MINUSTAH could have helped avoid the loss of institutional memory. However, the UN human resources system does not allow having two civilians in the same post in a mission at the same time, so departing staff and new staff never overlap—contrary to the way rotations are usually organized for the military components of peace operations. Some have reported a lack of good will and cooperation from former MINUSTAH staff who had not been hired for MINUJUSTH, some of whom almost "sabotaged" the new mission. Documents were reportedly destroyed, share drives not organized, and lists of contacts not transmitted. MINUSTAH's joint mission analysis center did not transfer its analysis, notes, or reports to its successor. The joint analysis center in MINUJUSTH, therefore, did not start out with analysis of migration movements, gangs, or drug trafficking trends.

On top of all of this, a culture of withholding information has also hampered the mission from the beginning. Basic documents such as the concept of operations are not easily shared. "You have to move heaven and earth to get a hard copy," explained one MINUJUSTH staff member. Overall, the lack of accountability for transferring and archiving information was a major source of delays during the initial months of MINUJUSTH.

A Short Lifespan with Ambitious Objectives

From the outset, one of the mission's main challenges has been to reconcile its short lifespan and light footprint with its ambitious objectives. The mission is mandated to "assist the Government of Haiti to strengthen rule of law institutions in Haiti; further support and develop the Haitian National Police; and engage in human rights monitoring, reporting, and analysis," all in a

133 Interview with former MINUSTAH staff member, February 15, 2018.

two-year period.¹³⁴ In his July 2017 report, the secretary-general referred to two strategic objectives: “improving the accountability and human rights compliance of relevant institutions and improving their professionalism and efficiency.”¹³⁵ He further defined the objectives of MINUJUSTH in October 2017 as follows:

Supporting and developing the Haitian national police; strengthening Haiti’s rule of law institutions, including the justice and correctional sectors; and advancing the promotion and protection of human rights, including through monitoring, reporting and analysis.... The substantive components of MINUJUSTH (security and stability; political and rule of law; and human rights) will work together as a team to achieve the Mission’s cross-cutting strategic objectives of increasing the professionalism and accountability of key Haitian rule of law institutions.¹³⁶

The seeming contradiction between MINUJUSTH’s timeframe, resources, and objectives was raised by a number of interlocutors. Strengthening the rule of law is an inherently long-term process and ambitious mandate. As one staff member said, “MINUSTAH, over thirteen years, did not get results for the rule of law in Haiti.”¹³⁷ For some, giving this mandate to a small-footprint, transition mission with a two-year timeframe was condemning the mission to failure. According to a representative of a Security Council member, the council set ambitious objectives for MINUJUSTH’s substantive tasks to push for performance: “We set the bar high on purpose to be able to have results.”¹³⁸ There is therefore an unspoken acknowledgement that the objectives set are unreachable and that MINUJUSTH will end, whatever its results.

Other interviewees doubted whether a peacekeeping operation was the actor best placed to strengthen the rule of law in a country like Haiti. Moreover, while MINUSTAH had an extensive presence across the country through its field offices, MINUJUSTH’s civilian teams are all based

in Port-au-Prince and have much less capacity to support deep institutional reform. As a senior representative of the Haitian National Police stated, “I have good memories of MINUSTAH. There was a good partnership, a real collaboration. I don’t see MINUJUSTH. I don’t see the support [for] justice. MINUJUSTH is not sufficiently involved. They are almost absent.”¹³⁹

Finally, the announcement that MINUJUSTH would depart after two years also had the counterproductive effect of reducing its leverage. As explained by a UN staff member, UN staff’s national counterparts would often point out that they were “leaving soon, anyway.” This made it difficult to push for and advance difficult reforms or demonstrate the UN’s interest in following up on the implementation of any reforms achieved.

Transition Planning versus Substantive Work

Member states have conceptualized MINUJUSTH as the last mission before a definitive end of peacekeeping in Haiti within two years and, as such, as a transition mission. At the same time, the Security Council gave MINUJUSTH a broad substantive mandate. MINUJUSTH therefore has to not only complete the liquidation of MINUSTAH and prepare for the end of peacekeeping in Haiti but also work toward deep and ambitious institutional and societal reform. As one head of section in MINUJUSTH highlighted, “We are a transition mission. Our mandate is human rights, rule of law, police, and transition—even if it is not written in the resolution. We should have had it clearly spelled out.”¹⁴⁰

Torn between competing tasks, MINUJUSTH has organized its work in a confused way. Interviews revealed that staff disagree about how to prioritize and how much energy to dedicate to substantive tasks versus transition tasks. They also struggle to understand how to reduce the scope of their work, without clear guidance from mission

134 Security Council Resolution 2350 (April 13, 2017), UN Doc. S/RES/2350.

135 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/604, July 12, 2017.

136 UN General Assembly, *Budget for the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti for the Period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018*, UN Doc. A/72/560, October 20, 2017.

137 Phone interview with former MINUSTAH official, March 9, 2018.

138 Interview with high-ranking diplomat, Port-au-Prince, July 5, 2017.

139 Interview with representative of Haitian National Police, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

140 Interview with MINUJUSTH senior official, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

leadership or New York. “I need to be told what I should stop doing,” explained a manager.

As it built up from October 2017 to January 2018, the mission lost two to three months just reflecting on its strategic approach and plans. As soon as they were ready to start thinking about what MINUJUSTH could do in Haiti in early 2018, mission staff were already being asked to produce transition documents such as the benchmarked exit strategy. As had been the case for MINUSTAH, the upcoming transition started to occupy a lot of space, time, and energy. Staff dedicated themselves to technical processes related to the liquidation, the launch, or the upcoming closure and ended up having little time for substantive considerations and political strategies. Some were busy correcting reports and data and following up on cases from MINUSTAH. Others were trying to draft the new strategies for MINUJUSTH and design work plans in accordance with the mandate which, in some cases, could take several months. Others were already engaging in the benchmarking exercise for the exit strategy.

These different demands have pulled the mission in different directions, and each work stream has ended up constraining the others. Because the exit is on everyone’s mind, political plans were not based on what the country needed but on what was possible in two years. Indicators, benchmarks, and objectives were defined artificially to fit the timeframe instead of based on criteria for stability in Haiti. The transition process, once again, is focused on quantitative indicators that make it easy to tick boxes.

Logistical and Human Resources Challenges

Starting up the New Mission while Liquidating the Old

As recognized by the secretary-general, “The closing of one mission and establishment of another simultaneously has posed challenges for

MINUJUSTH to reach its full operating capability and has placed pressure on its resources, in particular its staff, who in some instances have been required to perform tasks beyond their regular duties.”¹⁴¹ Managing both the liquidation of an old mission and the launch of a new mission was described by several interlocutors as a “nightmare,” as a lot fell on MINUJUSTH’s shoulders, and “everybody [was] overworked and overwhelmed.” For both MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH, there was no grace period for teams to focus on support and logistical preparations without responsibility for delivering their substantive mandate.¹⁴²

MINUSTAH’s liquidation team left Haiti on December 31, 2017, without finalizing the liquidation. MINUJUSTH was therefore involved “in the separation of all MINUSTAH staff members, the management of archives, the negotiation of camp closures, and the organization of commercial sales of written-off assets.”¹⁴³ Continuing to liquidate something as expansive as MINUSTAH was a heavy burden for the smaller mission.¹⁴⁴ As a head of a support section pointed out, “Eighty percent of the time and resources are dedicated to liquidating MINUSTAH.”¹⁴⁵ There were still hundreds of containers that needed to be liquidated, many with incomplete inventories and lost keys for their locks.¹⁴⁶ Over a thousand staff had to be let go and 350 hired.¹⁴⁷ Finding ways to relocate staff to other duty stations, accelerating retirement processes, regularizing those on sick leave who could not be let go, and dealing with all cases of litigation from the management and evaluation unit were overwhelming, time-consuming tasks for MINUJUSTH’s reduced human resources team.

In February 2018, one staff member acknowledged that “we already know we won’t be able to finish. Having three staff [for property management] is acceptable for MINUJUSTH, but they are busy with liquidating MINUSTAH. It is an enormous amount of work.... We won’t be finished liquidating MINUSTAH when

141 UN Security Council, *United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2018/527, June 1, 2018.

142 Interview with UN official, New York, March 2, 2018.

143 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2018/241, March 20, 2018.

144 The Supply Chain Management Section is composed of thirty-six staff, including twenty-two national staff. The Centralized Warehousing and Distribution Unit has ten staff, the Procurement Unit has five staff, the Acquisition Management Unit has five staff, and the Property Management Unit has four staff.

145 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, February 14, 2018.

146 Ibid.

147 “The Mission separated 621 staff between June and September; the remaining 611 staff will be separated by 15 October.” UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/840, October 5, 2017.

MINUJUSTH will end.” Several chiefs of section reported that their teams were experiencing burnout, with staff filling dual or triple roles, and that liquidation was a mission in itself. The liquidation of MINUSTAH during the first months of its deployment removed substantial capacities from MINUJUSTH’s start-up and limited its potential to innovate. Some spoke of a missed opportunity: “We had the opportunity to launch innovative processes. We could have tested new things [but are] too busy with the liquidation.”¹⁴⁸

Mission support personnel eventually completed the MINUSTAH liquidation at the end of June with the closure of four camps in Port-au-Prince.¹⁴⁹ However, the start-up of MINUJUSTH was still ongoing at the time of writing of the secretary-general’s August 2018 report: “The second phase of the consolidation plan, which will last approximately six months, will on the one hand set up the new Mission supply chain structure at the logistics base, while on the other hand rightsizing and adjusting MINUJUSTH inventories to the current needs and requirements in support of the mandate.”¹⁵⁰

From a human resources perspective—as in any new mission—it took time to publish vacancies, find the right candidates, and recruit new employees. One-third of police officer positions were still vacant in February 2018. However, MINUJUSTH was helped by exemptions from human resources rules and procedures to expedite processes, allowing it to fill most civilian vacancies within three months of deployment.¹⁵¹ In addition, most new hires were selected by the Department of Field Support’s field personnel division at UN headquarters rather than by hiring managers in the field. MINUSTAH was asked to focus on separation of staff, while New York teams would manage new recruitment. This division of tasks arguably relieved field staff from the additional burden of

recruitment so they could focus on substantive work from the outset and helped fill vacancies more quickly.¹⁵² However, the fact that some managers did not have a chance to select their team has created tension, and some described it as an unnecessary move by headquarters.¹⁵³

Getting by with Limited Resources

MINUJUSTH’s lack of resources has also reportedly had a detrimental impact on operations. As the heir to MINUSTAH, MINUJUSTH uses that mission’s old equipment, vehicles, and offices. While MINUJUSTH is smaller and less expensive, there was still political pressure from the Security Council and financial pressure from major financial contributors for the mission to be as inexpensive as possible, since they saw any costs as “negative savings” from the closing of MINUSTAH. MINUSTAH’s annual budget was \$345.9 million from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017, and \$90 million from July to December 2017 for final maintenance. MINUJUSTH’s budget from October 16, 2017, to June 30, 2018, was \$88.1 million. The idea that the mission was closing soon also pushed planners to stay in a drawdown and liquidation mindset instead of a start-up mindset. For example, the limited supply budget deprives the mission of the possibility of additional resources or new equipment. “We cannot have new computers or new cars, if needed,” complained one staff member.¹⁵⁴ “If a vehicle broke, we would not be able to replace it,” explained another.¹⁵⁵

The lack of logistical support outside Port-au-Prince, in particular, was an impediment to the operationalization of activities. One senior UN police officer regretted, “We are the last component permanently present in the regions and have no support.” Formed police units (FPU) were reportedly staying in dilapidated buildings without air-conditioning or reliable generators.¹⁵⁶ The

148 Interview in Port-au-Prince, February 14, 2018.

149 UN Security Council, *United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2018/795, August 30, 2018.

150 Ibid.

151 For example, the organization made exceptions for mandatory breaks in service, and headquarters instructed all other peacekeeping missions to release personnel recruited for MINUJUSTH as soon as possible, instead of after the regulatory sixty days.

152 In February 2018, MINUJUSTH’s vacancy rate was only 9 percent. Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, February 14, 2018.

153 Interviews with MINUJUSTH staff member, Port-au-Prince, February 14–15, 2018.

154 Interview with MINUJUSTH staff member, Port-au-Prince, February 13, 2018.

155 Interview with MINUJUSTH staff member, Port-au-Prince, February 12, 2018.

156 Interview with UN police representative, February 15, 2018.

number of vehicles available for MINUJUSTH was also reported to be insufficient.

One of the major changes between the two missions is the withdrawal of some integrated support capacities that had been shared with the military component and disappeared with its departure. While it needed greater mobility to compensate for reductions in the number of peacekeepers, MINUJUSTH has no air assets, with the exception of contracted helicopters that do not allow FPUs to be transported with their weapons.¹⁵⁷ Several interlocutors mentioned that this has limited the remaining police component's projection capacity. Medical support was also withdrawn with the closure of the UN's Level II health center, which had previously been managed by the military component of MINUSTAH. MINUJUSTH only has a Level I clinic and now relies on a costly service in Port-au-Prince for aerial medical and casualty evacuations. Engineering capacity also disappeared with the military component. As one senior mission representative regretted, "There is no consideration for support once the military is out. New York has not been able to calibrate peacekeeping with only a police component. They don't understand why we would need health and air support."¹⁵⁸

Civilian staff mentioned the need to compensate for reduced internal capacities by outsourcing more: "We have the same needs, so there are more things to outsource." The new model of support delivery does indeed plan for more outsourcing, but, as described by MINUJUSTH staff, this "is not necessarily well adapted to peace operations in a country like Haiti." The secretary-general recognized in his June 2018 report that "plans to outsource some nineteen services have not proceeded at the anticipated pace." In November 2018, he reported that "efforts to outsource ancillary services such as engineering, environmental and waste management, camp management and maintenance, [and] vehicle maintenance and repairs have been hampered by limited local service

provider capacity in Haiti."¹⁵⁹

MINUSTAH used to employ 3,000 individuals as local contractors, but MINUJUSTH shifted to outsourcing to local companies for cleaning, maintenance, and other support tasks. However, the skills, equipment or expertise are not necessarily available in Haiti. As explained by a representative from a support division, "Outsourcing is nice on paper, but the market does not allow it." For example, a local company with the capacity to repair four vehicles a day might now be asked to repair twelve vehicles a day and does not have the necessary equipment for such a surge in demand. It would need to invest in a car lift, which would only be profitable after three years of operations, but MINUJUSTH would be leaving the country after two years. "There is a lack of calculation and vision," according to a representative of a support component of MINUJUSTH.¹⁶⁰

Managing Staff Expectations

Following the lessons learned from MINUSTAH, SRSG Susan Page sought to avoid the frustration and disappointment of staff who did not believe that the mission would close and were caught by surprise when they were let go. She insisted that MINUJUSTH had a two-year lifespan and that staff should not count on its renewal beyond that. In the mandatory induction training for all new staff, the SRSG strongly invited newly arrived personnel to start looking for jobs and alternative plans for their future and to keep in mind the imminent closure of MINUJUSTH. This had a devastating effect on staff morale in the mission.

MINUSTAH staff who stayed in Haiti also negatively perceived the downgrading of their levels.¹⁶¹ The mission was designed with lower grades for some staff: for example, the SRSG was recruited at the assistant secretary-general rather than the under-secretary-general level, the DSRSGs at D2 instead of assistant secretary-general, the head of public information at P5 instead of D1, and the head of the joint mission analysis center at P4 instead of P5.

¹⁵⁷ The helicopter support provided by the Bangladeshi military for MINUSTAH was replaced by a contracted Russian company.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with UN police representative, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

¹⁵⁹ UN Security Council, *United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2018/1059, November 28, 2018.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with MINUJUSTH senior official, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

¹⁶¹ For an organizational chart of MINUJUSTH, see UN General Assembly, *Budget for the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti for the Period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018*, UN Doc. A/72/560, October 20, 2017.

Incapable of offering future prospects for its personnel, the UN struggled to retain good staff for both MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH as the missions were seen to be ending. According to one UN official, many “good ones, who are rostered and have a network, left. Those who stayed are overworked and under-compensated. [Field support] staff are doing the job of [professional] staff... We have people who are not motivated, people who are bad, [and] some are motivated but are completely burned out and about to throw in the towel or are emotionally sick.”¹⁶² As described by a UN agency official, MINUJUSTH staff “are just there for a few months and are already thinking about leaving. They are even less motivated than MINUSTAH.” “They have to start from scratch, everything has to be done, and they have one year for results. I wouldn’t sign up for that.”¹⁶³

DESIGNING NEW APPROACHES

MINUJUSTH was conceptualized to mark a fresh start from MINUSTAH and a shift in the UN’s approach in Haiti and to crystallize stabilization gains before the definitive end of peacekeeping in the country. While the UN has promoted a substantive shift in the strategy and activities of the UN mission, such a change has remained difficult to implement.

A Substantive Shift in Activities

Without a military component, the mission prioritized justice, as indicated by its name, and focused on three areas: police development, the rule of law, and human rights.

For the police component, there was a change in approach to building the capacity of the Haitian National Police. As the technical skills of the police were generally considered satisfactory, the mission instead focused on middle and senior management cadres and commanding officers. It shifted from traditional joint patrolling to a greater focus on supervisory mentoring and strategic advice to

senior-level officers. The mission collocated 295 individual police officers and experts with the ten departmental directorates and collocated the police commissioner with the director of the Haitian National Police.¹⁶⁴ This mentorship advisory program focuses on police administration, investigation, community-oriented policing, accountability mechanisms, and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.¹⁶⁵

UN police shifted their approach in parallel with a restructuring of MINUJUSTH’s police component (including the restoration of grades, the development of specific terms of reference for all 295 authorized individual police officers to find the right candidates, and the recruitment of staff according to skills, experience, and ability to speak French). This transformation of the profiles of UN police was necessary for the new vision based on mentorship, as new skills and expertise were needed, requiring experienced and qualified officers at the highest levels. This explains the delay in filling the posts (only 214 out of 295 were filled by March 2018).

In terms of the rule of law, there was a general consensus among member states, UN officials, and experts that the mission should focus on justice. Justice is often considered the Achilles’ heel of the rule of law and the political system in Haiti, due to the slow progress of cases through the judicial system, endemic corruption, and a general lack of accountability and oversight. MINUJUSTH focuses on strengthening accountability and oversight mechanisms in the justice sector, including the Superior Council of the Judiciary and the Supreme Court. It is also working to reinforce the criminal justice system, improve prison conditions, and pursue the adoption of key legislation such as a criminal code, criminal procedure code, law on legal aid, and prison law.¹⁶⁶ It works on community violence reduction by improving access to legal aid and supporting social reinsertion initiatives.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Interview with UN official, New York, 8 March 8, 2018.

¹⁶³ Interview with UN agency representative, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

¹⁶⁴ MINUJUSTH is still mandated to protect civilians under imminent threat and can use its formed police units to intervene in support of the Haitian police as an operational reserve.

¹⁶⁵ UN General Assembly, *Budget for the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti for the Period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018*, UN Doc. A/72/560, October 20, 2017.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

As for the human rights component, the mission continues to monitor and investigate human rights violations. However, it has shifted its focus to supporting civil society and the Office for the Protection of Citizens in monitoring human rights and pursuing accountability for violators. It is also working to improve the government's compliance with human rights law and engagement with human rights mechanisms.¹⁶⁸

MINUJUSTH not only received a new threefold mandate, but it was also supposed to develop an entirely different approach to its peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. While field staff found it difficult to navigate both substantive work and transition work, as mentioned above, experts from both headquarters and member states argued that both can be reconciled by designing innovative ways to implement the mandate and adapting ways of working. A UN official in New York weighed in on this, saying, "The point about transition planning is that people should work in a different manner trying to implement the mission mandate, knowing that the work won't be done by the time the mission closes. This involves not doing everything yourself but leaving room and grooming others to play that role in the future. This is constantly misunderstood."¹⁶⁹ As one MINUJUSTH official also explained, "There is a need to change the mindset of UN staff—to move from assistance to empowerment through coaching and mentorship—in order to prepare the exit strategy."¹⁷⁰

From this perspective, DPKO sought to design the new mission based on a shift from technical assistance—which had been provided over the last two decades with limited results—to political engagement "in order to unblock the rule of law dead end."¹⁷¹ MINUJUSTH is therefore built on

two main civilian sections: the human rights service and the political and rule of law service. The latter demonstrates the new approach merging politics and the rule of law.

To implement this new approach to peacekeeping in Haiti, MINUJUSTH has developed innovative concepts, tools, and activities adapted to its light footprint and reduced presence. These include the concept of "model jurisdiction," "mobile teams," and its mentorship and transformational leadership and coaching approach more generally.¹⁷² "Model jurisdiction" involves providing capacity building and advisory support for rule of law institutions in selected jurisdictions.¹⁷³ Through joint working and monitoring sessions with governmental institutions and data collection, MINUJUSTH supports a specific jurisdiction "in defining a legal strategy to prioritize the processing of its legal caseload on the basis of a data-driven analysis, with a view to processing a critical mass of legal cases and thereby reducing the number of prolonged pretrial detentions."¹⁷⁴ "Mobile teams" are meant to strengthen political outreach and facilitate links between the government and civil society outside the capital (see Box 3). They were designed to complement good offices in Port-au-Prince with dialogue between constituents and their political representatives at the grassroots level.

A Laborious Change of Strategy

Despite the design of a new strategy and the shift in activities, implementing change, and convincing external and internal actors about this change, remains a major challenge for MINUJUSTH. Externally, the symbolic change of name has not convinced the Haitian population that there is a change of approach, and local communities still see MINUJUSTH as MINUSTAH. The "new" mission

168 Ibid.

169 Interview with UN official, New York, December 13, 2018.

170 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, February 12, 2018.

171 Interview with DPKO official, New York, February 7, 2018.

172 A training program on transformational leadership and coaching for staff at P4 level and above was under discussion in 2018 in order to sensitize staff to this new methodology for capacity building in Haiti. Interview with MINUJUSTH staff, February 16, 2018.

173 It is described as "dedicated capacity-building and advisory support for the effective operation of police, criminal defence and justice and correctional institutions in one selected jurisdiction, with added emphasis on improving Haitian ownership. Successful results in the model jurisdiction will be expected to become a catalyst for improvement in other jurisdictions throughout Haiti." UN General Assembly, *Budget for the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti for the Period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018*, UN Doc. A/72/560, October 20, 2017.

174 Through data collection and visits to courts, prosecution offices, prisons, or police stations, it supports follow-up on cases of prolonged pretrial or unlawful detention. UN General Assembly, *Budget for the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti for the Period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018*, UN Doc. A/72/560, October 20, 2017.

Box 3. MINUJUSTH's mobile teams: An innovative tool for the transition?

One “innovation” of MINUJUSTH was its mobile teams, designed to compensate for the lack of field offices and to ensure the mission retained a presence outside the capital despite its reduced workforce. MINUSTAH used to have an extensive civilian presence in the country before vacating field offices.¹⁷⁵ The mobile team is composed of fourteen staff, including ten national staff, who travel “to all nine regions outside Port-au-Prince to undertake mandated activities.”¹⁷⁶ The visits are supposed to be multidimensional, as civilian staff with the needed expertise from other sections can join the team:

[The] Mobile Teams Unit will coordinate and facilitate the regular deployment of teams with integrated expertise, drawing on staff from the political, justice, corrections and human rights sections, to nine departments outside Port-au-Prince. This joint approach will ensure that the different elements of support are closely intertwined, ensuring that synergies are maximized and that the approach has a common intent, so that the Mission's reach in furthering its mandate is not hindered by the concentration of Mission personnel in the capital.¹⁷⁷

The initial thinking behind these mobile teams was that they would monitor and provide early warning outside the capital and facilitate political outreach and advocacy, making the mission an intermediary between civil society and government decision makers. They were designed to complement the high-level good offices provided by the SRSG in Port-au-Prince and to connect government reforms to societal demands and expectations. Indeed, the mobile teams organized several visits to the field and facilitated discussions and town hall meetings involving members of the government (including parliamentarians and members of the Ministry of Justice and Courts) and community-based organizations. From June to August 2018, they supported “17 town hall debates throughout the country to raise community awareness of the rule of law, with an additional 32 activities and three projects on the rule of law.”¹⁷⁸ The mobile teams can also implement quick impact projects to support peacebuilding efforts in the regions, especially by providing infrastructure and equipment for justice, correctional, and security institutions. Seventeen projects were underway in August 2018.¹⁷⁹

While the mobile teams are an important tool allowing a small mission to have a broader presence, their innovative character can be questioned. Similar multidimensional teams have been developed in other settings, such as the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (MONUSCO) joint protection teams. To some, the UN has sought to “sell” a concept that is not particularly original to raise interest in MINUJUSTH's operations. It is also unclear if this concept has been implemented effectively. The participation of other sections is not systematic, and internal competition has hampered their optimal functioning. Some also questioned the real added value of mobile teams as a cost-saving measure in comparison to having small teams permanently based in the regions.¹⁸⁰

Finally, the teams do not seem to have received enough guidance about their role and the type of political outreach they are supposed to conduct. In the summer of 2018, they were still in the process of defining their approach and clarifying their methodology.¹⁸¹ Interviewees at MINUJUSTH headquarters demonstrated a diverse range of views about the role of the mobile teams. Some supported the initial plan of having mobile teams facilitate discussions between the population and their government to close the gap between different factions of society. Others saw the teams as an extension of their own section to which they could outsource activities to be undertaken outside the capital. In other cases, mobile teams just collected information from the field about the population's needs and demands as MINUSTAH teams used to. Some saw this approach as raising expectations among the population and contradicting MINUJUSTH's empowerment approach, which was meant to replace the assistance approach of MINUSTAH.

175 The mission went from ten regional offices in 2012 to four, two, and finally zero as of June 30, 2017.

176 Most of those staff formerly worked for MINUSTAH.

177 UN General Assembly, *Budget for the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti for the Period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018*, UN Doc. A/72/560, October 20, 2017.

178 UN Security Council, *United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2018/795, August 30, 2018.

179 Ibid.

180 Mobile team staff spend most of their time on duty travel and are entitled to daily subsistence allowances.

181 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, July 6, 2018.

is also partly composed of the same staff—especially leaders—and uses the same compounds and vehicles. The rebranding has also not improved perceptions of the mission. Nicknames such as “Minijupe” (“mini-skirt” in French) and the mispronunciation “Minijuste” (for “mini-justice”) have put into question the effectiveness of the name change in improving the mission’s image. MINUJUSTH has also not been able to distance itself from the negative impact of MINUSTAH’s scandals: “The population does not make a difference [to the UN],” repeated several staff. Another staff member confirmed that “MINUSTAH was ended to make a political point. [It] could have done the same thing [a reduced mission focusing on police and the rule of law] as MINUSTAH.”

The change of approach has also been difficult to pursue internally. Although it was ostensibly announced, it has remained unclear both to MINUJUSTH staff and to its partners, including the country team, the government, and civil society.¹⁸² The first resolution on MINUJUSTH adopted by the Security Council only gave it a six-month mandate, making it difficult to plan strategically and effectively.¹⁸³ The direction and strategic vision of the mission leadership has also remained unclear. As one senior staff member from mission support explained, “The mission concept is unclear. We should not do what MINUSTAH was doing at a smaller scale.”

The political work of the mission—including providing good offices, advising the government on reforms, and connecting the government and civil society, the private and public sectors, and elites and non-elites—were particularly ill-defined. The mission failed to clarify the balance between technical assistance and political engagement. It also continued working in silos, with the police and civilian components operating separately, without any robust coordination mechanism to work toward mutually reinforcing objectives. In addition, the police work described in the secretary-general’s reports remains focused on operations such as UN police’s participation in joint temporary checkpoints, foot patrols, joint operations, crowd control operations, and

operations to regain control of zones from gangs, with less publicized information on strategic mentorship activities.¹⁸⁴

Some mission staff and external actors operating in Haiti saw the mission as being in a wait-and-see posture. One staff member stated, “They just hope they won’t break anything and be able to go quietly.” According to a representative of a UN agency, the main strategy of MINUJUSTH was to avoid doing harm and “hope there won’t be a natural disaster” that compromises the departure plan.

Another factor of uncertainty for MINUJUSTH was the absence of a political vision defined by leadership. MINUJUSTH did not recruit a dedicated chief of staff. Instead, DPKO sent different officials to temporarily fill the position (for a one-month period in March, a five-month period in June, and a three-month period in October). The lack of continuity in this key leadership position, essential to instilling a sense of strategy, guiding activities, and managing staff, was detrimental to MINUJUSTH’s general operations. The fact that the SRSG was absent from the mission beginning in March 2018, with the DSRSG acting as the SRSG until September, also contributed to the lack of strong direction and cohesiveness. The DSRSG had to assume the responsibilities of a DSRSG/RC/HC and SRSG at the same time—a heavy burden in a transition period. The police commissioner was also replaced in August 2018.

THE EXIT STRATEGY OF MINUJUSTH: TRANSITIONING TO THE END OF PEACEKEEPING IN HAITI

While MINUJUSTH has been building on some of the lessons from MINUSTAH’s transition as it prepares for its departure, its exit strategy has been hampered by difficult conditions. Even though MINUJUSTH’s exit has been more clearly planned from the beginning than that of MINUSTAH, the situation remains far from ideal. Questions remain about the future of Haiti and the UN presence there, complicating any planning exercise, and societal reforms and national ownership of the transition remain insufficient. In this context,

182 Interviews in Port-au-Prince in February and July 2018.

183 MINUJUSTH received its first mandate for the period of October 16, 2017 to April 15, 2018.

184 UN Security Council, *United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2018/1059, November 28, 2018.

MINUJUSTH risks falling back to a process-driven transition.

Questions Remaining for the Future of Haiti

The Uncertainty of a Follow-on UN Presence

The Security Council has been undecided about the exit strategy of UN peacekeeping in Haiti. After having found a compromise to conclude MINUSTAH and launch a small police and justice mission, the council waited for the Secretariat to propose benchmarks and a plan for closure. While pushing for the end of peacekeeping in Haiti, the council did not have a predetermined idea about what would follow MINUJUSTH. The mission could hand over its responsibilities to the government of Haiti and the UN country team (UNCT). It could also be succeeded by a special political mission to continue providing good offices and conducting political work with the government. In February 2018, the council was even uncertain about whether to extend the mission for six months or one year, hesitating between giving the mission time to implement its tasks and pushing it to demonstrate results.¹⁸⁵

In the Secretariat, diverging views about whether to establish a special political mission have also been reported. For some, these missions should only be established in acute hot spots, and the situation in Haiti is not “as serious as Syria, Yemen, or Somalia.”¹⁸⁶ For others, what Haiti most urgently needs to achieve sustainable stability is a political process, which would justify a UN political presence, whether a special political mission, a special envoy, or a strengthened resident coordinator’s office with a good offices role.

The lack of interest in and attention to Haiti by the Security Council—which is focused on the big multidimensional stabilization missions and has shifted regional attention from Haiti to Colombia—has led to a wait-and-see approach once the two-year timeframe was agreed on.

Council members have also raised concerns that the mission is not communicating its needs and questioned the realism of its benchmarks. Hesitating between a six-month and a one-year renewal, the council eventually renewed MINUJUSTH for one year in April 2018 and demanded a report be delivered every ninety days.¹⁸⁷ This demonstrated the council’s lack of trust in the performance of MINUJUSTH and the mission’s ability to organize its departure. At the same time, it has created a heavy workload with tight reporting deadlines for the mission, which in turn has led to time-consuming drafting processes that distract staff from pursuing substantive action on the ground.

Without clarity on what will be next, MINUJUSTH’s preparation for a transition has been inherently limited. Rather than making concrete plans for a transition, it has to plan for different scenarios, depending on the council’s eventual political and financial choices. For example, if there will be a special political mission, MINUJUSTH will have to adapt its headquarters to be occupied by it; if not, it will have to consider transferring assets to the country team or government. The decision about a follow-on political mission will also have an impact on how the mission organizes good offices and exerts political pressure. MINUJUSTH also needs to plan for October 2019 being the end of the mission—tricky timing, as this will be just a few weeks before the next round of legislative elections.¹⁸⁸ A UN official stated that “we need to think about it now, whether we will have a political mission or not. We need to identify the interlocutors and have a plan.”

The Volatile Security Situation

The perception of a stable security situation was the UN’s strongest argument for a transition. It justified moving away from militarized peacekeeping and eventually withdrawing all peacekeepers. In 2017, the secretary-general described Haiti as “stable,” painting an optimistic picture:

185 Interview with representative of a Security Council member, New York, February 6, 2018.

186 Interview with senior UN official in Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

187 Security Council Resolution 2410 (April 10, 2018), UN Doc. S/RES/2410. Since its establishment, the mission has already fallen under a stricter reporting calendar than MINUSTAH did, demonstrating the council’s intention to monitor the situation in Haiti more closely. Resolution 2350 requested the secretary-general to report within 90 days, with an additional report within 180 days and an assessment report 30 days before the expiration of MINUJUSTH’s mandate. Resolution 2410 requested reports every ninety days starting on June 1, 2018.

188 One-third of the Senate will be elected in 2019, the other two-thirds of the Senate will be elected in 2020, and the next presidential elections are in 2021.

Thirteen years after the arrival of MINUSTAH, political violence has significantly diminished and immediate threats from armed gangs, whose origins are rooted in social and political divisions, have been significantly reduced.... The [police] force has demonstrated increased capacity in the planning and execution of complex operations, including the securing of elections and crowd control, while simultaneously performing routine tasks in combating crime and more effectively maintaining public order.¹⁸⁹

However, the increasingly volatile security situation in Haiti has complicated UN transition plans. Almost all interviewees—including Haitian parliamentarians¹⁹⁰—recognized that the ingredients for instability or the resumption of violence are still present and have been on the rise since MINUSTAH's departure: corruption, a dysfunctional justice system, governance and development issues, and violent groups and gangs manipulated by economic elites.¹⁹¹

Several recent incidents have called the initial optimistic assessment of the Secretariat into question. In February 2018, tensions were tangible when former president Michel Martelly refused to comply with the hour marking the end of carnival and continued to circulate on his float followed by crowds, and the police were unable to make him stop and abide by public regulations. On July 6, 2018, following an increase in oil prices, violent riots erupted in Port-au-Prince and hundreds of roadblocks were erected across the country, pushing the UN to keep staff on lockdown for three days and the US embassy to evacuate nonessential staff. The police proved unable to control the situation, with armed elements building barricades, burning tires, and preventing the population from

circulating freely.¹⁹² In October, protests erupted in thirty-one locations and were marked by violent incidents, roadblocks, and burning tires. In November 2018, nationwide anticorruption protests demonstrated growing social discontent and instability in the country. Those protests turned violent, and several civilians were killed, injured, or arrested.¹⁹³

The secretary-general's August 2018 report reflects this deterioration, acknowledging that "gang activity continued to increase," "the number of violent protests increased," the July incidents "marked a significant spike in violence," and this "violent civil unrest reflects the continuing volatility of the situation." Representatives of MINUJUSTH shared their concerns over the likelihood of increased insecurity at the border due to trafficking and organized crime. As one staff member warned, the security situation was also increasingly threatening for UN staff.¹⁹⁴

The transition rationale, the relevance of MINUJUSTH, and the resilience of the police—until then presented as the main success and the "flagship project" of UN peacekeeping in Haiti—have been called into question by these episodes of insecurity. The role of MINUJUSTH during the July riots was unclear. The mission's first tweet after UN staff went on lockdown (on the second day of the riots) was about distribution of sexual exploitation and abuse prevention cards to formed police units. The mission only issued a press release on July 9th, after the riots had ended, in coordination with the Core Group,¹⁹⁵ and later publicized the actions of UN police to dismantle barricades.

The lack of early and effective action by the national police during the civil unrest also raised

189 In March 2017, the secretary-general noted that "the security situation remained relatively stable." UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/840, October 5, 2017.

190 Interview in Port-au-Prince, July 5, 2018.

191 Interviews in Port-au-Prince, February 11–15, 2018. A number of interlocutors underlined the improvement of the political situation since 2004 but also warned that all the ingredients for civil unrest were still present. A lot of interviewees—during the first round of interviews conducted for this study in February 2018—had already assessed that violence could erupt again and mentioned the rise in oil prices (which would result from the end of state subsidies for oil, as requested by the International Monetary Fund) as a possible trigger for "a revolution in Haiti."

192 The unrest was initiated by groups of young men who moved rapidly across the greater Port-au-Prince area, setting up roadblocks, burning tires, and firing guns in the air, effectively shutting down the entire metropolitan area within a few hours. Initially unimpeded by law enforcement officials, the movement gradually gathered larger crowds that ransomed passersby, burned vehicles, and looted and ransacked businesses in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area as well as the communes of Pétiion-Ville, Delmas, and Tabarre. At least two national police officers and six civilians were reported to have been killed, and extensive material damage to private businesses was also reported. Similar unrest, on a lesser scale, took place across the country. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/223, March 16, 2017.

193 UN Security Council, *United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti*, *Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2018/1059, November 28, 2018.

194 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

195 The Core Group is composed of the DSRSG, ambassadors of Germany, Brazil, Canada, France, and the US, and representatives of Spain, the Organization of American States, and the European Union in Port-au-Prince.

concerns over their politicization. Both Haitian police and UN police representatives interviewed in 2018 warned that the politicization of the police would destabilize the country and undo the institution-building efforts of the last decade.¹⁹⁶ The government's intention to reestablish a national army has also been described as a potential factor of destabilization and could undermine efforts to professionalize and reinforce the police.¹⁹⁷

This relapse into violence is unlikely to justify extending MINUJUSTH's mandate beyond the two-year timeframe, nor is MINUJUSTH the best tool for addressing the underlying issues that could trigger violent unrest. The World Bank, in its country diagnosis and analysis of drivers of conflict, identified socioeconomic factors and a "broken social contract" as factors of instability.¹⁹⁸ Structural drivers notably include the persistence of a culture of zero-sum politics and deep-rooted political polarization, mistrust of the government, the prevalence of corruption, and lack of accountability for political and economic elites—all listed by the secretary-general as conditions that could provoke a new violent crisis in Haiti.¹⁹⁹ As stated by several MINUJUSTH staff, in such a context, the mission will not prevent another crisis and "has to leave."²⁰⁰ Haiti's long-term stability mostly relies on national political will to undertake reforms and the involvement of civil society in holding the government accountable for delivering them.

The Need for National Ownership

Reduced Leverage over the Government

MINUJUSTH started up a few months after the establishment of a new Haitian government that had only overlapped with MINUSTAH in its

liquidation phase. This constrained the UN's ability to work with the government on priority reforms. In addition, while buy-in from the national government is crucial to a transition, the priorities of the new UN peacekeeping mission and the government did not align. The government wanted to end Chapter VII peacekeeping in the country, which did not happen.²⁰¹ During the discussions at the Security Council, the Haitian representative suggested that the situation in Haiti was not a classic threat to peace and security, publicly expressing his disapproval of a new Chapter VII mission.²⁰² The government was also focused on the cholera crisis, which was intentionally excluded from MINUJUSTH's mandate. Instead, MINUJUSTH would focus on justice reform, which was not one of the main areas of reform in the new government's development and economic agenda (called the "Caravane du changement"), which focuses on infrastructure, education, and health.²⁰³ Although the acting SRSR stated that "the UN in Haiti does not have an agenda" but is supporting the Haitian people's agenda, the disconnect between mandated tasks and government priorities was apparent.

The negotiation of a new status-of-mission agreement between the UN and the Haitian government also took time; four days before the start of MINUJUSTH, Security Council members expressed their concerns that it was not yet signed. It eventually was signed by the Haitian president on October 16, 2017, but as of March 2018 it was still pending validation by parliament.²⁰⁴ The first press conference given by the acting head of mission was described by one staff member as "destroying MINUJUSTH from the beginning," as

196 Interviews in Port-au-Prince, February and July 2018.

197 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/840, October 5, 2017.

198 Due to demographic growth, GDP per capita fell by 0.7 percent per year on average between 1971 and 2013. Raju Jan Singh and Mary Barton-Dock, *Haiti: Toward a New Narrative*, World Bank, 2015.

199 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2017/223, March 16, 2017.

200 Interview in Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

201 During the Security Council's visit to Haiti in June 2017, both the president and parliamentarians requested that the new mission be placed under Chapter VI. Civil society representatives and the private sector echoed this request, arguing that Chapter VI would make it possible to attract greater investment. UN Security Council, 7994th Meeting, UN Doc. S/PV.7994, June 30, 2017.

202 UN Security Council, "Haïti: le Conseil de sécurité dresse, 'à une ombre majeure' près, un bilan positif de la MINUSTAH, remplacée par une mission réduite d'appui à la justice," Meeting Coverage CS/13026, October 12, 2017.

203 The government has seven priorities: road infrastructure, access to clean water and sanitation, the countrywide electricity grid, modernization of agricultural production, enhancement of public health and education, improvement of the environment through reforestation, and management of waterways and watersheds.

204 "On 16 October, at the flag-raising ceremony to mark the opening of MINUJUSTH, my Deputy Special Representative and the Haitian Minister of Foreign Affairs signed the MINUJUSTH status-of-mission agreement. On 20 October, President Moïse submitted the agreement for consideration and adoption by Parliament, where it remains pending." UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2018/241, March 20, 2018.

he reportedly minimized the importance of having parliament sign the agreement. This declaration was criticized by parliamentarians and the Haitian press.²⁰⁵

The mission generally seems to have limited leverage over the Haitian government. The mission's limited timeframe, with a departure many see as already decided on regardless of what happens in Haiti, puts MINUJUSTH in a weak political position to pressure or influence national stakeholders: "[The government] think[s], 'You are only here for two years, so what does it change?'"²⁰⁶ The downgrading of the level of staff was also reported as having an impact on the credibility of the mission and protocol with the host government: "Even [special political missions] have [under-secretaries-general]. Lowering the SRSG level was a mistake and sent the wrong message to authorities."²⁰⁷

MINUJUSTH has continued to lose leverage during the first year of its deployment. On February 26, 2018, a press release by MINUJUSTH quoted SRSG Susan Page speaking about reports that Haitian National Police had executed civilians during anti-gang operations. It also quoted a Transparency International report ranking Haiti as the most corrupt country in the region, in what some called an "unnecessary" move.²⁰⁸ This came at a crucial diplomatic moment for Haiti, which was hosting the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) conference on February 26th and 27th. The press release exacerbated tensions between the mission and the government, and the resulting political crisis led to Page's reassignment.²⁰⁹ The secretary-general did not demonstrate his support for his SRSG in the face of this criticism, which several interviewees saw as a regrettable move.²¹⁰ As a

result, MINUJUSTH operated without an SRSG on the ground from March to August 2018. The press release scandal had a chilling effect on the mission's political work and good offices and greatly reduced its political voice, as it adopted a more timid approach in the aftermath of the SRSG's departure. For example, it was one of the reasons MINUJUSTH did not issue any press releases during the riots of July 2018 and waited for the Core Group to agree on messaging.²¹¹

As a result, many interviewees criticized the mission's insufficient political engagement. Several diplomats, development actors, and national stakeholders pointed out that the added value of a peacekeeping mission would have been its political role, as other types of assistance and capacity building can be taken care of by the country team or other partners. Haitian interviewees underlined the need for the UN to keep a presence in Haiti to accompany and influence the government, "help the government make the right decisions," and push it to undertake and implement the reforms needed.²¹² One Haitian police officer recognized that the UN presence deters political attempts to influence the police and that MINUJUSTH needed to strengthen its influence in this regard. As one UN staff member echoed, "We need individual courage to strengthen institutions and their independence against politicization instead of only giving vehicles and desks."²¹³ Similarly, Haitian representatives said they expected MINUJUSTH to be a stronger and more vocal advocate against corruption and for better governance.²¹⁴

Non-UN partners also tend to regret that the mission is still focusing on technical assistance and capacity building, while "a political push would have been useful" for a more effective division of

205 MINUJUSTH, press conference, Port-au-Prince, October 24, 2017; "Youri Latortue Répond à Mamadou Diallo," *Le Nouvelliste*, October 25, 2017; Rosny Ladouceur, "MINUJUSTH: Diallo Relativise l'Accord du Parlement, Youri L. Réagit," Loop Haiti, October 25, 2017.

206 Interview with MINUJUSTH senior official, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

207 Interview with MINUJUSTH senior official, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

208 MINUJUSTH, press release, "Minujuth Welcomes the Assignment of Investigating Judges in the Petrocaribe Case and Calls on the Authorities to Do the Same for Lilavois and Grand Ravine," available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/fr/node/10731>. The press release was removed from MINUJUSTH's press release webpage.

209 On May 4th, Susan Page was nominated as a special adviser on rule of law for the Global Focal Point Review implementation.

210 On February 28th, a press release from the secretary-general's spokesperson stressed that "the Secretary-General has pledged a new type of partnership with Haiti in achieving not only the 2030 vision of a Haiti without extreme poverty, but also in defeating the devastating eight-year-long epidemic of cholera" and that "this is an opening of a new relationship between the Government of Haiti and the United Nations." Available at www.un.org/press/en/2018/db180228.doc.htm.

211 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, July 9, 2018.

212 Interviews with Haitian representatives, Port-au-Prince, July 5, 2018.

213 Interview with MINUJUSTH staff member, Port-au-Prince, February 14, 2018.

214 Interview with Haitian parliamentarian, Port-au-Prince, July 5, 2018.

labor in Haiti. “I don’t see what the added value of the mission is,” said a development expert.²¹⁵ A representative of a member state from the Core Group also shared his disappointment about the mission: “I expected a more precise and more robust mandate, with leverage to enable the SRSG to talk to the government with more strength.”²¹⁶ In line with this analysis, the vast majority of interviewees advocated for a political mission or a resident coordinator with strong political responsibilities to follow the closure of MINUJUSTH—if the SRSG manages to exercise political influence and build momentum.

The arrival of a new SRSG in August 2018, the recent protests against corruption and mismanagement, and the subsequent response of the government with greater emphasis on and support for the justice system, as well as the establishment of a new cabinet, all present opportunities to build new momentum for MINUJUSTH’s political engagement. The establishment of a joint commission to discuss the transition, composed of advisers of the prime minister and mission staff, is a promising step and was reported to have increased government understanding of the transition process and reinforce dialogue on justice and political matters.²¹⁷

Building a Social Contract: The Political Limits of Peacekeeping

A political strategy should be at the center of any peacebuilding effort in Haiti. For example, experts inside and outside of the mission have analyzed gang violence as a political issue, not only a security or police issue. This is where peacekeeping hits a ceiling in Haiti. Haiti needs not just the technical assistance and mentorship provided by peacekeepers, but social change. “We won’t change anything related to justice, corruption, governance,” recognized one MINUJUSTH official.²¹⁸

MINUSTAH addressed the symptoms of insecurity in Haiti. “We were running after every case of prolonged detention, but the corruption is endemic and recurrent.... We did not manage to effect change,” said a former staff member.²¹⁹ While MINUSTAH focused on priorities such as structural reforms, mechanisms for implementation, oversight, control, and accountability, it overlooked change in political, institutional, and social culture—in other words, the social contract. As one UN staff member highlighted, “We always talk about capacities—it is our jargon. But it’s not a lack of capacities here. Political elites are very capable of maintaining things as they are here. It is a lack of interest and will.”²²⁰

Likewise, MINUJUSTH focuses on the adoption of key codes and laws by parliament as a criterion for success. Although their adoption is a key step, the implementation of these laws will be an even bigger challenge. Parliamentarians interviewed highlighted that the adoption of a criminal code—one of the main benchmarks of MINUJUSTH—will not ensure that Haitian judges will implement it in a fair or effective way. The executive branch has reportedly nominated a number of judges who are corrupt or lack credentials.²²¹ The political will of the government is necessary for meaningful reform of the justice sector.

The anthropological and sociological aspects of the transition in Haiti are essential, but they lie out of the reach of MINUJUSTH. As a Haitian anthropologist described, the state-centric approach pursued by MINUJUSTH has been failing: “Strengthening the police can have a negative impact on detention when justice is so weak. The problem is that institution building was done in phases and in silos... without sociological and anthropological views because these profiles don’t exist in the mission.”²²²

215 Ibid.

216 Interview with Core Group diplomat, Port-au-Prince, February 16, 2018.

217 UN Security Council, *United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2018/1059, November 28, 2018.

218 Interview with MINUJUSTH senior official, February 15, 2018.

219 Interview with former MINUSTAH and current MINUJUSTH staff, Port-au-Prince, February 14, 2018.

220 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, February 15, 2018.

221 Interview with Haitian parliamentarians, Port-au-Prince, July 5, 2018.

222 Interview with civil society representative, Port-au-Prince, February 18, 2018.

Determining the Exit Strategy

Another Process-Focused Transition?

The mission concept of MINUJUSTH has already envisioned a specific end state: a stronger Haitian National Police will have expanded its scope of work; key justice legislation will have been adopted and implemented, and the justice system will be stronger; MINUJUSTH will have fostered increased local ownership of solutions to rule of law and human rights challenges; and there will be a seamless handover to the UNCT. To determine the specifics of the transition, the mission began to consider the exit strategy as early as 2018, with specific benchmarks, assessments, and planning exercises.

Starting in February 2018, teams worked on establishing benchmarks for the exit strategy, enabling them to integrate transition thinking into the work of the mission from the outset. The eleven identified benchmarks are aligned with the targets of the 2017–2021 UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) developed jointly by the government of Haiti and the UN (including funds, agencies, and programs) and signed on June 30, 2017. Building on what MINUSTAH sought to do at the end of its own transition planning, MINUJUSTH has closely linked the mission's transition process with the UNDAF, which anchored it in a broader strategic agreement between the UN system and the host country. Some UN officials described the UNDAF itself as “the exit strategy.”²²³

However, defining these benchmarks was a challenging exercise. Among MINUJUSTH staff, there was not a clear consensus on what a benchmark was. One official acknowledged that some staff “don't understand the difference

between a benchmarked exit strategy and a transition plan.”²²⁴ There is a general consensus that there was a visible lack of professionalism, expertise, and attention in defining these benchmarks. Some also referred to the benchmarking exercise as “drawn-out” and “futile,” lacking vision and mired in bureaucracy.²²⁵ There was a widespread perception that the mission would again get lost in technical processes rather than focusing on its substantive work and impact.

The benchmarks seem to be vague, difficult to measure, and unrealistic.²²⁶ They are framed in terms of ambitious end states, such as that “by the end of the MINUJUSTH mandate, a solid foundation for longer term political stability, security and development in Haiti would have been established.”²²⁷ Member-state representatives acknowledged in private that the proposed benchmarks were extremely disappointing, but they officially endorsed them in the April 2018 Security Council resolution to avoid losing time. “They should have refused them,” stated a MINUJUSTH staff member. “We established criteria for things we don't do, such as corruption and elections. We don't even have a baseline.”²²⁸

After the benchmarking exercise, the mission was asked to prepare indicators. For each benchmark, it established quantitative criteria for success, providing a more concrete sense of feasibility.²²⁹ For example, all thirteen specialized public order units should be capable of responding to security threats, 100 percent of public order operations should be planned and conducted with no MINUJUSTH support by October 2019, and 88 percent of the population should express satisfaction with how the national police performs in reducing crime by April 2019. Out of the forty-six

223 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

224 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, July 8, 2018.

225 Interview with UN official, New York, December 13, 2018; interview with MINUJUSTH staff member, February 13, 2018.

226 They include the following: “The national police responds to public disorder and manages security threats throughout Haiti, demonstrating elevated levels of professionalism, human rights awareness and gender sensitivity”; “The national Office of the Ombudsperson functions independently and protects citizens whose rights have been violated”; “National authorities comply with international human rights obligations”; and “Rule of law and anti-corruption institutions demonstrate increased capacity to fight corruption.” UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti*, UN Doc. S/2018/241, March 20, 2018.

227 Other end states include: “Haiti's rule of law and security institutions—justice, corrections, and police—would be “able to demonstrate increased professionalism”; and “women and men across the country will express reasonable levels of confidence in the Haitian rule of law and security institutions' abilities to provide security for all Haitians, impartial access to justice and improved prison conditions, without substantial international political engagement and operational support.”

228 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, July 8, 2018.

229 MINUJUSTH, “MINUJUSTH Benchmarks: Mandate Implementation Dashboard,” September 6, 2018, available at <https://minujsth.unmissions.org/en/minujsth-benchmarks-mandate-implementation-dashboard>.

indicators for the benchmarks, thirty-five directly reflect the targets of the UNDAF. Some indicators were already achieved by the end of 2018, such as the promulgation of the legal aid law and the appointment of a minister-delegate for human rights within the executive branch.²³⁰ The secretary-general, however, shared concerns “that the achievement of a substantial number of indicators remain[s] elusive.”²³¹

There was limited transparency about some of the figures and targets chosen for the indicators, which are seemingly of questionable relevance: for example, nine out of eighteen prisons should be certified as being able to operate without full-time support from international actors, 60 percent of misconduct cases involving the police should have sanctions implemented, and there should be eighteen or fewer gang-related incidents in the hot-spot zones of Cité Soleil, Bel-Air, and Martissant. Some of the quantitative output indicators also appear to be artificial: for example, ten reports should be published by local civil society organizations monitoring human rights violations, 750 cases should be closed by investigative judges in the jurisdiction of Port-au-Prince, and 800 new case files should be processed in real time by prosecutors in the jurisdiction of Port-au-Prince—without any guarantee of the quality of these reports or integrity in the treatment of cases. Beyond the benchmarking exercise, the mission also decided on a communication strategy and, in the summer of 2018, began drafting a political strategy. UN police, the political and rule of law service, and the joint mission analysis center finalized a security assessment in July, though this quickly became outdated with the resumption of violence in July and November.

The police component specifically developed a two-year support and mentorship plan aligned with the Haitian National Police’s Strategic Development Plan for 2017–2021. The withdrawal of two of its seven formed police units was already planned to occur between October 15, 2018, and April 15, 2019, with the remaining five units

staying in the country until October 2019. Although this decision was taken before the episodes of violence in July and November 2018, it was maintained, and two units left Haiti at the end of 2018.

In the summer of 2018, the human rights service was also already planning its own transition and the establishment of an OHCHR-MINUJUSTH joint office, which would become an independent OHCHR office after the departure of MINUJUSTH. MINUJUSTH and UNDP, from their side, have worked within the framework of the joint rule of law program. On the support side, building on lessons learned from MINUSTAH, the mission started to plan for liquidation and assess the scope of drawdown requirements in the summer of 2018.²³² In the process of reducing assets to match MINUJUSTH’s needs, some disagreements about the pace and the sequencing of the transition have come up between different components. For example, mission support started dismantling the Delta Base where the police are based and had to rebuild what they had dismantled due to disagreement from the police commissioner.²³³

Preparation for the transition of MINUJUSTH has also involved many activities already done for the transition of MINUSTAH: “They are going to redo the mapping of [the UNCT’s] capacities, but it has already been done,” said one staff member.²³⁴ Without institutional memory or strategic leadership guiding the transition, the same discussions have been repeated, and the primacy of processes has prevented the production of meaningful plans. As with MINUSTAH, demands from New York largely guided the process, and a focus on monitoring, evaluation, and reporting kept MINUJUSTH political teams busy with a technical transition planning.

Because the decision to leave has already been made by the Security Council, the transition is largely being organized in reverse. The UN transition policy states, “UN transitions are... first and foremost a response to significant change in a

230 UN Security Council, *United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2018/1059, November 28, 2018.

231 Ibid.

232 Ibid.

233 Interviews with a senior MINUJUSTH official and representative of UN agency, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

234 Interviews with former MINUSTAH and current MINUJUSTH staff, Port-au-Prince, July 2018.

country's political and security situation and its economic and social development.... Ideally, UN mission drawdowns and withdrawals will be triggered by the Security Council's recognition of sufficient progress made towards the implementation of the mission's mandate." They may also be triggered "by the withdrawal of consent of the host government or by other political or security developments that necessitate a change to UN presence."²³⁵

As stated by a UN expert, drawdowns are either "based on end states or end dates."²³⁶ In the case of MINUJUSTH, the Secretariat has to establish a strategy that fits a two-year timeframe instead of assessing the stabilization needs as the basis for a future strategy. "We are asked to identify what we can do in two years, not what should be done for Haiti," said one staff member.²³⁷ There are usually two possible approaches to a transition: leaving when what needs to be done has been achieved, or leaving for other political or financial reasons and self-servingly defining benchmarks that the mission can realistically achieve in its timeframe. A third way could be to assign ambitious transition benchmarks to actors outside the mission such as the government and the UNCT to address after its withdrawal.

In Haiti, the first of these approach is impossible: the mission cannot stay until it achieves what is necessary for the stabilization of the country. Regarding the second approach, the mission had the opportunity to define realistic and modest benchmarks, mindful of its short lifespan, which would have enabled it to be seen as successful at its closure. Surprisingly, MINUJUSTH chose to set ambitious benchmarked objectives that are almost certainly unachievable in just two years, but then defined measurable and achievable quantitative indicators primarily driven by the need to ensure the success of the mission. For the most ambitious objectives, aligned with the 2017–2021 UNDAF, it will have to adopt the third approach—and count on partners on the ground to reach them after 2019.

Limited Coordination with the UNCT and Partners

Even more than for MINUSTAH, which was replaced by another peacekeeping mission, coordinating with the UN country teams and other partners is essential for MINUJUSTH's exit, expected to mark the end of peacekeeping in the country. The transition plan's alignment with the UNDAF is often raised as a useful way to facilitate the transition to the country team. As described by a UN official, "The decision to link transition planning to the UNDAF makes sense, rather than a separate planning framework. This avoids duplication [and] ensures more interest from the agencies and alignment with national priorities."²³⁸ The mission also has had a joint rule of law program with UNDP since 2016, allowing them to mutually benefit from each other's comparative advantages and resources to pursue justice reforms and provide capacity building for the justice system in a coordinated manner. While these initiatives have facilitated dialogue between the mission and the UNCT, many in the field highlighted insufficient coordination. Notably, as of the summer of 2018, there was still no memorandum of understanding between MINUJUSTH and UN agencies—a tool that had helped MINUSTAH facilitate collaboration with the country team but that took two years to be established.²³⁹

On paper, the country team is being "consulted" on the transition process. According to country team representatives, however, the mission has tended to approach such consultations as a box-ticking exercise, organizing meetings without necessarily taking into consideration and integrating the views of the UNCT. As the head of a UN agency regretted, "There was one meeting with the UNCT and the mission on benchmarks, and they did not consider our recommendations... and they checked the box 'UNCT coordination'.... We are not consulted on the exit strategy at all."²⁴⁰ While there is an Integrated Policy and Planning Group for discussing Outcome Group 5 from the UNDAF, which the mission is particularly involved

235 UN DPKO/DFS Division for Policy, Evaluation and Training, *Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal*, April 2, 2013.

236 Interview with UN official, New York, December 13, 2018.

237 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, February 15, 2018.

238 Interview with UN official, New York, December 13, 2018.

239 Interview with MINUJUSTH official, Port-au-Prince, February 14, 2018.

240 Interview with representative of a UN agency, July 6, 2018.

in, meetings are reportedly unproductive, and “there are no meeting notes.”²⁴¹ In addition, with the exception of UNDP, many agencies do not participate in joint planning exercises, and “not all agencies are interested in doing work related to peacebuilding” and the transition.²⁴²

The joint structures and exercises have also left some country team representatives dubious about the actual benefits of coordination. Some questioned the significance of the alignment of the mission’s transition process with the UNDAF: “We have extremely vague benchmarks aligned with a UNDAF that is even vaguer. It would have been a shame if they were not aligned.”²⁴³ The joint rule of law program has also been described as “money given to UNDP without any consultation” and a procurement tool for MINUJUSTH.²⁴⁴

MINUJUSTH’s lack of coordination goes beyond the country team. While there are meetings between MINUJUSTH and donors, the mission has been criticized for sending junior or national staff, which reduces the credibility of its engagement. The government has also reportedly convened meetings with multilateral and bilateral donors without involving MINUJUSTH.²⁴⁵

Some also raised the concern that MINUJUSTH’s mandate led it to duplicate the work of other international actors in Haiti, highlighting the effective lack of a common analysis, mapping, and division of labor between the mission and international partners. Haiti is often described as a crowded arena for humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions, with hundreds of NGOs and multiple bilateral aid programs. Some, for example, were already working on specific capacity-building and support tasks for the justice system that MINUJUSTH chose to focus on. One representative of a development agency complained that the UN mission would “attend meetings and then claim ownership” for activities jointly pursued by different actors.²⁴⁶ The interviewee also emphasized that now that the

mission has targets, it is more competitive and less flexible about the division of labor with partners, assigning itself to specific files and asking humanitarian and development actors to cover those it does not work on: “They should be more flexible to adapt their plans with partners.”²⁴⁷

Conclusion

The transition from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH and the upcoming transition to the end of peacekeeping in Haiti have faced many challenges, both external and internal, and both substantive and logistical. External factors—including natural disasters, contested elections, civil unrest, and a geopolitical context of increased scrutiny of peacekeeping and UN budget constraints—have slowed down or sped up the organization of the transition and generally called into question the relevance and impact of a continued UN peacekeeping presence in the country.

Within the mission, political and bureaucratic choices have also impacted the transition’s effectiveness. Due to the lack of a strategic vision and clear ownership of the transition by mission leadership, as well as a lack of strategic guidance from headquarters, MINUSTAH’s transition planning was marked by the primacy of processes and a focus on institutional documents and outputs. This technical exercise exhausted the teams in the field and failed to produce satisfactory, realistic, and meaningful plans. Even though the transition was planned early, as recommended by the UN transition policy, it remained mostly bureaucratic and inward-looking on the civilian side of the mission and failed to properly include the country team or the government. The police component, on the other hand, managed to define and defend a specific vision for developing the capacity of the Haitian police, which informed the eventual decision to close MINUSTAH and establish MINUJUSTH, a small peacekeeping mission focused on the rule of law. Again with the

241 Ibid.

242 Interview with UN official, New York, December 13, 2018.

243 Interview, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

244 Interview with representative of a UN agency, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

245 Interview, Port-au-Prince, February 13, 2018.

246 Interview with development actor, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

247 Interview with development actor, Port-au-Prince, July 6, 2018.

exception of the police component, strategic decisions ended up being taken by headquarters, sidelining field staff and excluding them from the design and planning of the follow-on mission.

The lack of meaningful and strategic coordination between the police and civilian components, the support and substantive sides of the mission, headquarters and the field, and the peace operation and its country team partners were detrimental to the transition from MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH. It led to a misalignment of objectives and priorities, which undermined the buy-in of the host state, and resentment and discouragement among field staff, which hampered performance and business continuity.

While the Security Council adapted the drawdown decision to developments in the field—such as the electoral crisis—and took inputs from the Secretariat on the need for continuous engagement on the rule of law and police mentorship into account, it also made decisions that made little operational sense for political purposes. Instead of reducing and adapting MINUSTAH's mandate, the political urge to rebrand peacekeeping efforts led to an unnecessary, hectic transition on the ground. Creating MINUJUSTH instead of continuing and adapting MINUSTAH for two additional and final years made it harder for both missions to effectively deliver their mandates. It forced the Secretariat to go through the burdensome process of closing a thirteen-year multidimensional mission and to open a new mission that would only last two years.

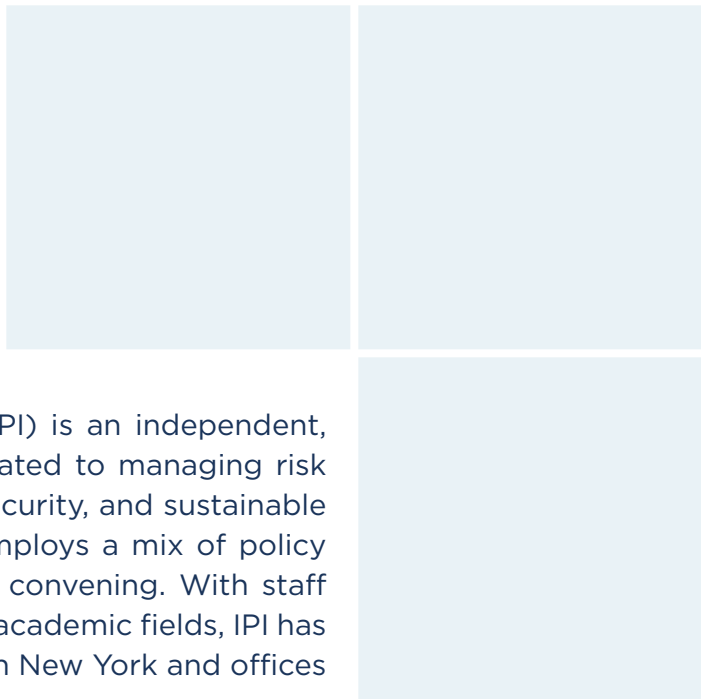
This decision also condemned MINUJUSTH to being a transition mission, continuously trying to reconcile its start-up with its closure, its short lifespan with ambitious substantive objectives, and its new structure with institutional continuity. Deteriorating security and increasing political polarization in Haiti have also limited the mission's leeway and potential from the outset. MINUJUSTH, a "transition mission" par excellence, demonstrates the many dilemmas of being between two contradictory objectives: stabilizing Haiti and departing the country as soon as possible.

A strategic assessment mission is scheduled to be deployed to Haiti by February 1, 2019 to decide on the future UN role in the country and make

recommendations for drawdown and exit. Several lessons learned from past and current transitions should inform this transition process.

- **UN peacekeeping missions cannot do nation-building, but they should be politically engaged.** The UN should take the opportunity of the approaching end of peacekeeping in Haiti to better clarify what peacekeeping is and what it cannot be. In Haiti, instability is driven by rifts in the social fabric and social contract and by the lack of political will and engagement of national political and economic actors. While the UN can provide political, security, institutional, and technical assistance, these efforts cannot compensate for nationally driven reform. Nonetheless, political engagement by the UN is key to encouraging the changes needed to stabilize and sustain peace in the country. In parallel, member states, too, should demonstrate political engagement by exercising their leverage over national political and economic decision makers and by supporting local peacebuilders.
- **Successive UN missions should be linked.** Instead of seeking a brutal rupture between MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH, the UN should have linked the closure of the former with the start-up of the latter. This would have made the transition more coherent and improved management of public perceptions and internal frustrations. To avoid a similar rupture, the Security Council and the Secretariat should provide MINUJUSTH the opportunity to properly prepare for the follow-on UN presence, be it a special political mission, a strengthened resident coordinator's office, or some other arrangement.
- **Peacekeeping missions should plan for transitioning under less-than-ideal conditions.** Peacekeeping missions rarely have the luxury of exiting a country under perfect conditions. The resumption of civil unrest on several occasions in 2018, increasing criminal violence, and continued fractures in Haitian society have demonstrated that stability is tenuous. As the Security Council is unlikely to go back on its intention to withdraw peacekeepers from Haiti, the Secretariat should properly plan for a possible exit in a context of instability and unachieved benchmarks, conduct the necessary risk analysis, and prepare communication and mitigation plans.

- **Peacekeeping transitions are not just about process; they are also about vision.** Focusing on bureaucratic transition processes, technical documents and plans, and benchmarking exercises has driven staff energy away from looking at the political and strategic dimensions of the transitions. In contrast, MINUSTAH's police component managed to drive the transition as it was able to articulate a strategic and forward-looking narrative that Security Council members could buy into. A transition should be based on a clear vision and be connected to that of the government, civil society, and the UN country team.
- **Peacekeeping missions need to coordinate with other stakeholders and promote national ownership.** Better and more meaningful integration is needed between UN headquarters and the field, the mission's police and civilian components, the mission and the UN country team, and the UN and the government. In particular, MINUJUSTH's political strategy, as defined by the mission concept, should focus on giving Haitian authorities ownership, possibly through a compact or framework of mutual accountability. During the first year of its deployment, MINUJUSTH has been struggling to create a constructive space for dialogue on the most difficult governance issues. To further the legacy of peacekeeping efforts in Haiti, it should focus on its role providing good offices and political support to stabilization efforts.
- **The support aspect of transitions should not be neglected.** Liquidating old peace operations like MINUSTAH is a cumbersome enterprise, and both the Security Council and the Secretariat should be ready to dedicate enough time and resources to effective transitions. Pursuing a substantive mandate and liquidating a UN peacekeeping mission at the same time is also a major challenge for staff in the field.
- **The UN needs to pay particular attention to human resources and the human aspect of transitions.** Managing UN staff during a transition, especially when it involves drawing down and closing a long-lasting peacekeeping presence like MINUSTAH, is key to ensuring that the mission continues performing throughout the process. Leaders should define the right internal communication strategy to both prepare staff to exit and incentivize them to deliver until the end of a mission. This will also ensure a smoother handover, better legacy, and stronger institutional memory for a follow-on presence. Striking the right balance between old and new staff in the successor mission is also key to ensure both institutional memory and innovation and to maximize performance. Onboarding advisers from the old mission can be another option to explore. To be successful, MINUJUSTH's transition out of Haiti has to ensure the cohesiveness and well-being of staff.



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