

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Haiti's Army, Stabilization and Security Sector Governance

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Haiti's long and difficult security sector reform (SSR) process has entered a new phase. The reinstatement of the Haitian armed forces, nearly 20 years after former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide disbanded them, adds a new set of actors and more complexity to a process already struggling to deliver results amidst a seemingly endless series of political crises. The armed forces must be an impartial and apolitical institution if they are to contribute to stability in Haiti – an uncertain proposition given their past inability to stay out of the political arena. Building on a summary of the latest developments in the reinstatement process, this paper discusses its implications for Haiti's prolonged international engagement. In particular, the paper focuses on the process to develop a new White Paper on Defence and National Security in Haiti. This process has the potential to contribute to two of the most significant shortcomings of SSR in Haiti, a limited focus on security sector governance and a lack of local ownership.

The reinstatement process has been an interesting test case of the international donor community's commitment to the concept of local ownership, long held to be a moral and practical pillar of international engagement. Though reinstatement has been driven by Haitian authorities, the process has struggled to make progress without donor support, raising questions about the appropriate role of international actors in strategic decision-making at the national level. Regardless of their initial reaction to reinstatement, Haiti's international donors risk missing an opportunity to influence the development of an important pillar of Haiti's post-MINUSTAH security sector by choosing to remain on the sidelines.

## Introduction

Haiti is suffering through yet another political crisis. While observers hope for a peaceful electoral transition, recent events highlight uncomfortable realities about contemporary Haiti. Without the continued presence of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and its armed contingent, periods of insecurity and instability centered around political

transitions threaten to spiral out of control, with the potential for widespread violence. In this context, the continued development of both the Haitian National Police (HNP) and the newly reconstituted Haitian army will be a key factor in determining how much stability MINUSTAH will leave behind. Critically, it remains to be seen whether Haiti's army will reinforce or undermine the country's efforts to establish and enforce the rule of law. In presenting the latest developments in the process of reinstating Haiti's armed forces, this paper examines the related issues

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of security sector governance, local ownership and international intervention in Haiti. As the long-awaited post-MINUSTAH transition approaches, the failures of domestic governance after such a prolonged international engagement threaten the legacy of the UN-led intervention. For better or worse, Haiti's armed forces will play a significant role in the country's post-MINUSTAH future, and a failure by international donors to engage in the reinstatement process may end up being a missed opportunity to influence its development. In a related sense, the recent political upheaval suggests that the governance of Haiti's security sector should be as important a priority as the development of any particular capabilities on the part of the security forces. Moments of acute political crisis like what Haiti is now experiencing will test whether the armed forces will protect the state, as intended; or become embroiled in political conflicts, as many fear. Indeed, it was the country's political volatility and the threat of authoritarian responses that caused trepidation among domestic and international actors when former President Martelly announced his plan to reinstate the armed forces in 2011.

The reinstatement of Haiti's armed forces is best viewed in the context of a lengthy and internationally-led period of stabilization. Between 1991 and 2004, eight UN peacekeeping missions were deployed to Haiti, all with the mandate to build, stabilize or consolidate Haiti's democratic institutions (CIGI 2009: 2). The present mission, MINUSTAH, has operated in Haiti since 2004, and is joined by a variety of bilateral donors, notably the United States, Canada, France and Brazil, in supporting various security sector reform (SSR) activities targeting the Haitian police, justice and corrections sectors. In spite of this longstanding commitment, the international community's engagement in Haiti has generated relatively few notable successes, suffering from a number of familiar challenges including a failure to advance reforms focused on governance of the security sector. Above all else, Haiti's SSR process has been

criticized for a lack of local ownership and commitment. SSR in Haiti has for the most part been an internationally driven process, suffering from limited national ownership on the part of the country's political elites, and even less participation from the country's marginalized majority (see, for instance, CIGI 2009: 4; CIGI 2010: 4). The process to reinstate the armed forces, by contrast, has been wholly driven by Haitian authorities, with the Ministry of Defence having received virtually no support from Haiti's traditional SSR donors to date.

This paper will provide both a survey of the latest developments in the process to reconstitute the Haitian armed forces since 2011, as well as an analysis of what progress in this area means for Haiti's security sector reform process. In doing so, this article surveys various policy and academic reports, in addition to the author's own field work with the Haitian security sector and interviews with relevant experts. The first section of the paper outlines the politics and process of the disbanding and reinstatement of Haiti's armed forces, beginning with a discussion of Haiti's military history and the initial concern around the army's reinstatement. It then provides an update on how the process to revive the army has unfolded. The paper situates the army's reinstatement in the context of Haiti's failure to develop an effective system of security sector governance, and with the inability of Haiti's leaders to effectively plan, lead and own their country's SSR process. The paper, in turn, focuses on the promise of the development of Haiti's White Paper on Defence and National Security to improve both local ownership and security sector governance. It concludes with an analysis of what the Haitian army's reinstatement means for the future of SSR in the country, and the challenges facing Haiti's future leaders.

### **The Haitian Army's Past and Controversial Reinstatement**

To understand the significance of Haiti's new armed forces, it is important to understand the circumstances under which they were

disbanded and the controversy surrounding their reinstatement. Former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide disbanded the army, as one of his first acts of office in 1995, following a history of human rights abuses and involvement in coups against the country's elected governments (Le Chavallier 2011: 118). Aristide's decision to disband the armed forces came as a relief to many, considering Haiti had experienced some 34 military coups since gaining its independence (Heine and Thompson 2011: 16).<sup>1</sup> The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, initially focusing on former members of the Armed Forces of Haiti (*Forces Armées d'Haiti* – FAd'H), is widely considered to have been a failure, with many soldiers maintaining access to their weapons and few participating in the limited reintegration programming made available to them (see, for instance, Kolbe 2015: 66, 74; Camilien 2012).

Twenty years later, the Haitian armed forces were officially remobilized on October 9, 2015 by decree of the country's Council of Ministers.<sup>2</sup> The announcement was no surprise given former President Michel Martelly's 2011 campaign promises, including the creation of a commission to study reinstatement, the subsequent establishment of the Ministry of Defence and initial steps toward training a corps of military engineers. Even before Martelly's presidency, the movement to re-establish a military force had adherents from across Haiti's political spectrum. In 2004, Haiti's interim government established a commission to study the issue. Their report, published in February 2006, recommended the reinstatement of a military force without policing functions (*Commission Citoyenne de Réflexion sur les Forces Armées* 2006: 4, 22). The first commission cited the army's pivotal role in the nation's heritage, its continued constitutional basis, and the presence of a multi-national armed force in Haiti as justifications for reinstatement (*Commission Citoyenne de Réflexion sur les Forces Armées* 2006: 26). The subsequent government of President René Préval established a second

commission to study the same issue. This report, published in November 2008, similarly to the previous report, recommended a second armed force of 4,000 to 5,000 members (Boutellis 2011: 3).<sup>3</sup> Both commissions held public consultations, founding that "the majority of the population believed a second armed force or military was needed to complete the security architecture of the state" (CIGI 2010: 6). Additionally, the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP),<sup>4</sup> in both 2008 and 2012, asked Haitians whether they agreed that 'another force is needed in the country,' or that 'the police is enough to provide security.' In 2008, 75 percent of Haitians agreed that a second force was needed, compared to 72 percent in 2012, with the report's authors attributing these support levels 'in part to the fact that a national army is strongly linked with Haitians' sense of national identity' (Smith, Gélinau and Seligson 2012: 124).<sup>5</sup> For many Haitians, particularly younger Haitians who did not live through the Duvalier dictatorship,<sup>6</sup> the reinstatement of the armed forces is an issue of sovereignty and a matter of national pride (ICG 2012: 5). Both leading candidates for the presidency in Haiti's 2011 election—eventual President Michel Martelly and his opponent, Mirlande Minigat—favored reinstatement. Reinstatement, in some form, had clearly become politically inevitable.

The international donor community has however been less prepared to embrace the return of Haiti's armed forces. A presidential plan for the reconstitution of Haiti's armed forces, leaked in October 2011, sparked an outcry from critics who opposed the institution's reinstatement. International analysts largely stressed the risks of reinstatement, with initial critiques stressing several common economic, security and political concerns (see for instance Wilentz 2011, Washington Post 2011, Sprague 2012a). An International Crisis Group (ICG) report suggested that reinstatement should wait until a greater national consensus was found, the HNP reached full strength, and tax revenues rose to manageable levels (ICG

2012: iii, 6), noting that reinstatement was not advisable for 'budgetary, security and political reasons' (ICG 2012: 5). On the issue of cost, a number of critics argued that the price tag for reconstituting the armed forces (then pegged at US\$95 million) was unjustifiable, given the other urgent priorities facing the country. Some felt that reinstatement was just an empty gesture given to supporters of the army by the Martelly government—in this view, without the funds and the international support for reinstatement, the plan would inevitably stall.<sup>7</sup> According to a member of the presidential commission, a representative speaking on behalf of the United States and Canada told the commission that 'neither country would fund a reinstated military' (CIGI 2010: 7). The outgoing US ambassador to Haiti, Kenneth Merten, reportedly said at the time that Washington 'had no plans to help fund the army but would not interfere with Haiti's rights to set it up' (Buenos Aires Herald 2012).

As a matter of public policy, the two camps disagreed about the most appropriate model for Haiti's security architecture, with one side viewing the HNP as capable (with additional support and training) of ensuring stability throughout the country. From this perspective, a second armed force was unnecessary and potentially dangerously counterproductive. Consequently, domestic and international human rights groups, Haiti's development partners and parts of the UN mission all argued that the focus should remain on the reinforcement of the HNP, rather than the creation of a second armed force. While among the Haitian population, the more satisfied respondents to one poll were with the performance of the police, the less likely they were to argue that a second force was needed (Gélineau and Seligson 2012: 124).

The HNP's ability to safeguard the country's stability remains an open question. While the HNP has made important progress (for instance raising force levels to approximately 15,000),<sup>8</sup> there remain significant capacity shortfalls, financial issues and problems with

recruitment, among other serious issues, all of which are compounded by the significant downsizing of MINUSTAH ahead of its full withdrawal (for a complete discussion of the state of the HNP, see Baranyi and Sainsiné 2015). A recent progress report issued by the Haitian Government cites progress in command and control, training, administration and operations, while lamenting the underfunding of current programs and highlighting future risks arising from a loss of donor interest in the HNP (*République d'Haïti* 2016: 6–8). Of the 70 targets set in the 2012–2016 HNP Development Plan, the report's authors noted that six have been fully achieved, while 38 have seen significant progress and 25 remain in their initial phases (*République d'Haïti* 2016: 38). In spite of this progress, some researchers now discuss the need to retain MINUSTAH's police presence to maintain a minimum level of stability and ensure the withdrawal of the MINUSTAH armed contingent does not cause anarchy (Binetti 2016).<sup>9</sup>

There is no reason that the HNP is necessarily incapable of developing the security capacities currently provided by MINUSTAH, or those envisaged for the armed forces (for instance a special forces unit, an air support wing or a parks conservation service). Instead, supporters of reinstatement who doubt the suitability of a 'police-only' model for Haiti are more likely to cite the police force's poor historical performance, for instance during the instability of the 2000 to 2004 period. Ministry officials are quick to point out that in 2003 and 2004, when faced with an armed threat from paramilitary groups, police stations 'fell like dominos.'<sup>10</sup> They argue that whatever its mandated role, the police proved incapable of protecting itself; consequently one of the core mandates of the armed forces is to protect the police and the state.<sup>11</sup> This is a role, supporters argue, that is currently being played by MINUSTAH's armed contingent; and when the UN leaves, a Haitian armed force capable of protecting the country must replace it. The concept of a post-MINUSTAH security vacuum leading to widespread instability has thus become a

central justification for the reinstatement of the armed forces.

Practical questions aside, the main criticism leveled against the armed forces was political—namely that it was reckless to ignore the institution's history and its potential to be used as a tool of repression. Given the army's track record, it was hardly surprising that the Haitian human rights community and most of Haiti's international donors were initially against reinstatement. The chief concern was that the army would become a parallel armed force that would report directly to the executive and operate outside of civilian and parliamentary control.<sup>12</sup> Many privately feared that the armed forces would become a kind of Praetorian Guard for the presidency. President Martelly's association with the Duvaliers, and key military figures heightened fears of a return to Haiti's authoritarian past (Parker 2015). Even the Brazilian Minister of Defence, whose government has supported reinstatement, reportedly sought assurances that troops trained by Brazil would not be used as 'a personal militia' (The Economist 2013).

The security crisis prompted by the occupation of public spaces by approximately 400 armed former members of the FAD'H (*Forces Armées d'Haiti*), demanding reinstatement and the honoring of their military pensions, did little to allay these fears (see ICG 2012: 6). Undeniably, paramilitarism in Haiti remains a reality (see Sprague 2012b). In the days leading up to Martelly's exit, Guy Philippe, a former leader of the anti-Aristide coup in 2004 threatened to 'divide the country' should a transitional government be installed that did not represent the provinces, saying 'we are ready for war' (Delva 2016). Philippe's threats were a reminder that Haiti's politics remain marred by the potential for armed violence, as political interests continue to use affiliated armed groups, including gangs, to interfere with political processes.

### **The New Haitian Armed Forces**

This section of the paper progresses to provide an overview of the reinstatement process since President Martelly's initial

proposal was leaked in October 2011. Most important to note is that in part due to the reluctance of the international donor community to contribute to the government's efforts, the reinstatement process has moved more slowly than originally envisaged and remains in its very early stages. Perhaps owing to the limited involvement of its traditional donors, the Haitian government has taken a lead role from the outset. The reinstatement process has gone through several phases, beginning with the establishment of a civilian-led commission which was given 40 days to finalize a plan determining the form the reconstituted armed forces should take (Boutellis 2011: 1). This commission, like its two predecessors, also recommended the reinstatement of the armed forces (*Commission d'État d'Organisation de la Composante Militaire de la Force Publique d'Haiti* 2012). Following the commission's recommendation, the Ministry of National Defence was established, followed by the creation of a 2013–2016 Development Plan for the ministry. The Development Plan lays out five strategic aims for Haiti's defence forces and calls for a public-service oriented armed force made up of five components.<sup>13</sup> The Presidential Decree of 26 October 2015 further elaborated on the structure of the Ministry of National Defence and the Armed Forces (*Le Moniteur* 2015).

After the reinstatement plan was finalized and the ministry established, the process of recruiting the first members of the armed forces began. Faced with limited resources, the Haitian government started with the modest goal of accepting assistance from non-traditional SSR donors, including Ecuador and Brazil, to train the first cohorts of a new army corps of engineers. As a result, recruitment and training has moved at a far slower pace than the original Martelly plan of October 2011, which called for 3,500 troops to replace the MINUSTAH armed contingent by the time of their withdrawal. By 2012, then Minister of Defence Rodolphe Joazile noted that due to financial constraints, 'the army would be re-launched

with only about 1,500 troops' (*Buenos Aires Herald* 2012). To date, even that more modest goal has not been reached. Although the 2013–2016 Development Plan calls for the creation of a number of specialized units, the period from 2013 to 2015 saw limited progress, except with respect to the army corps of engineers and the development of the Ministry of National Defence. Both Brazil and Ecuador have pledged to support the development of the Haitian Armed Forces, chiefly by providing training to the corps of engineers.<sup>14</sup> The Ecuador-trained engineers are currently stationed at Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite; and after taking over a base formerly occupied by Ecuadorian peacekeepers, they have begun to undertake civil engineering projects such as the construction of roads.

One of the chief concerns of the international donor community was that any investment in the Haitian armed forces would draw attention and resources away from the HNP, which they considered the more important priority. Indeed, the Department of National

Defence's budget has been growing steadily since the 2012–2013 fiscal year, when its total budget was 180 million Haitian Gourdes (or US\$ 2.91 million at current exchange rates). By the 2015–16 fiscal year, this number had grown to 420.35 million Haitian Gourdes (or US\$6.79 million), more than doubling its budget in three years.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, as **Table 1** shows, the budgets of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Haitian National Police have grown also since 2012–2013. Indeed, the level of spending on the Department of National Defence and the size of its staff is tiny compared to both the MOJ and the HNP. In spite of the fact that the Ministry of National Defence's budget nearly doubled in 2015–16, it is fair to say that fears of the cost of reinstating the armed forces marginalizing the HNP's development have not yet been realized. The current level of funding has allowed the establishment and staffing of the ministry and the operation of a small corps of engineers, but little more. As one report noted, 'State Department officials have said that there has been virtually no

Budget Year	MOJ Budget (Gourdes)	HNP Budget	MOD Budget (Gourdes)	HNP Personnel	MOD Personnel
2012–13	7.18 billion (USD 115.97 million)	5.98 billion (USD 96.58 million)	180.0 million (USD 2.91 million)	11 859	NA
2013–14	10.34 billion (USD 167.01 million)	6.81 billion (USD 109.99 million)	240.0 million (USD 3.88 million)	11 814	41
2014–15	9.77 billion (USD 157.80 million)	7.55 billion (USD 121.94 million)	244.42 million (USD 3.95 million)	13 321	63
2015–16	10.86 billion (USD 175.41 million)	8.48 billion (USD 136.96 million)	420.35 million (USD 6.79 million)	14 385	120

**Table 1:** Budgets and Personnel, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of National Defence.

Sources:

*Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances* (2012). *Projet de Loi et de Finances, 2012–2013*.  
*Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances* (2013). *Projet de Loi et de Finances, 2013–2014*.  
*Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances* (2014). *Projet de Loi et de Finances, 2014–2015*.  
*Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances* (2015). *Projet de Loi et de Finances, 2015–2016*.

funding of the Defense Ministry to carry out larger plans' (Taft-Morales 2015: 40).

### **The Army and Haiti's Failures of Security Sector Governance**

In spite of its holistic and governance-focused ideals, SSR practice has often resembled more traditional security sector assistance focused on improving the effectiveness of the state's armed forces. In particular, when faced with challenging reform contexts, there has been a tendency to revert to train-and-equip models when faced with short-term security crises. In Haiti, international security sector assistance has, since 2004, been dominated by the massive undertaking of building up the HNP, which has received by far the most attention and stands as a relative success compared to programs in other key areas such justice and corrections (Boutellis 2011: 3). Reflecting the HNP's stature in the country, polling data from 2014 indicates that Haitians have among the highest levels of trust in their national police in the Americas (Gélineau and Zechmeister 2016: 176). However, even though international support has focused intensely on one pillar of the security and justice sector, recent research by Baranyi and Sainsiné (2015) indicates that the HNP remains plagued by insufficient growth, weak territorial decentralization, excessive use of force, and an inability to institutionalize community policing and counter violence against women. Regardless, successes in police reform have been undermined by dysfunctional courts and overcrowded and inhumane prisons—the result of uneven progress amongst the various pillars of SSR.

More importantly, notwithstanding the successes and failures of the HNP, the UN has not yet managed to support a successful SSR process.<sup>16</sup> Regarding the HNP, Timothy Donais states that 'to date in Haiti, the pre-occupation with achieving a basic level of operational effectiveness within the HNP has come largely at the expense of building mechanisms of democratic accountability'

(Donais 2011: 104). While the intense focus on increasing the operational capacity of the police force has led to progress in that area, there has been much less attention paid to security sector governance issues of parliamentary engagement, oversight, accountability and transparency. Most critically, the SSR process in Haiti has failed to address fundamental questions of security sector governance—instead remaining an executive-driven process at the strategic level. By virtue of the sheer length of international engagement in Haiti, projects with all manner of actors, approaches, partners and donors have been attempted, sometimes more than once. Community policing, for instance, has reappeared as a key component of the HNP development plan, after being a focus of international police reform efforts following the restoration of Haitian democracy in 1994 (Donais and Burt 2015: 14). What has been lacking, however, are improvements in the political and strategic processes by which policies are developed, priorities weighed and performance accounted for.

In a general sense, SSR in Haiti has traditionally been a top-down, non-consultative exercise, which sidelined communities in favor of political elites, whose performance has largely been dismal. In particular, the most recent parliament has been beset by political infighting, constitutional paralysis and general dysfunction. For the next phase of SSR to have any chance of success, Haiti's incoming parliament and leadership will have to perform better. How Haiti's politicians manage the early stages of development of the armed forces will be an important test. The initial impulse to restore the armed forces was driven by the personal will of the President, but it has since seen the establishment of a civilian commission in 2011 and, more recently, consultative workshops relating to the Defence White Paper. The challenge today is to build on these initiatives in order to reorient the development of the armed forces into a broader SSR discussion based on a strategic vision for Haiti's justice and security sector as a whole.

## Local Ownership in Theory and Practice

The fact that reforms will not be successful if imposed by external actors is a cornerstone of SSR theory and practice.<sup>17</sup> National authorities must be accorded the right to lead SSR processes. By contrast, SSR in Haiti has tended to be driven by donor agendas, with limited local ownership and political will, particularly in specific areas such as justice and corrections. Indeed, local ownership has been cited as a critical concern dating back to 1994, when the process to abolish the armed forces and create the Haitian National Police was conducted with 'minimal consultation' with the public, leading to its eventual unraveling and the creation of a new UN-led stabilization mission (MINUSTAH) (Mobekk 2005: 414–415). Some have argued that a lack of sovereignty, partially stemming from the presence of missions such as MINUSTAH, is at the root of Haiti's present problems (Podur 2012).

The army's reinstatement raises interesting questions about the nature and definition of local ownership in SSR. Reinstatement has thus far been driven by Haitian authorities and realized without the assistance of Haiti's traditional donors, whose strategy has been to ignore the armed forces and remain focused on providing support to the police and justice sectors, perhaps hoping that without the financial means to reconstitute the armed forces, the project would stagnate or stall entirely.<sup>18</sup> If the benchmark for local ownership is merely the absence of international involvement, the reinstatement process certainly qualifies. For more maximalist definitions of ownership requiring a broader and more inclusive consultative process, the picture is mixed.<sup>19</sup> What began as a process associated with a single political figure, later expanded to encompass an expert commission and eventually public consultations. On the other hand, these activities for the most part remained limited to Port-au-Prince elites. Beyond the few polls noted in this article, which focused on the overall desirability of a second armed force, there is little available data on Haitian attitudes towards specific

aspects of the reinstatement process, such as the appropriate form, size and mandate of the armed forces.

Among the most interesting questions arising from the army's reinstatement is why, after two decades of hoping Haitian authorities would take the lead on SSR, Haiti's traditional donors have shown so little interest in the armed forces. One explanation is that there is a legitimate difference of opinion about whether a 'police-only' model can work for Haiti. Donors who believe it can, such as Canada, have preferred to stay on the sidelines, viewing the armed forces as a distraction to the more important task of bolstering the police force. Another explanation for the lack of interest from Haiti's traditional donors is that these donors are not used to Haitians articulating their own strategic priorities. One ministry official told a story of a meeting where donors debating the merits of reinstating the armed forces were taken aback when he exclaimed: 'This is my country and I will not allow foreigners to think for me.'<sup>20</sup> The traditional donor community seems torn between a sincere conceptual attachment to the importance of ownership, and a legitimate belief that the government is making a mistake in reinstating the army.

## The White Paper: From Ownership to Governance

Given its origins as a Haitian-led initiative, the White Paper process—undertaken with the support of the Organization of American States (OAS) Inter-American Defense Board (IADB)—may be a particularly important opportunity to address both local ownership and security sector governance. After a visit by the IADB Chairman in January 2012, Haiti's government made a formal request that the IADB participate in the commission on the reinstatement of the armed forces, with the Chairman noting at the time that 'it is clear that this is a controversial topic given the difficult recent history of civil-military relations' (OAS 2012). It was during this time that Martelly's government

discussed with the IADB its plans for reintroducing the army. In a report to the IADB, the chairman noted that President Martelly 'acknowledged that this is a very unpopular issue for many in the international community' (IADB 2012: 2), while noting that 're-creating a Haitian Defence Force was a very popular idea with the vast majority of Haitians' (IADB 2012: 2). Martelly reportedly connected the issue of the army's reinstatement with Haiti's 'need to plan and have the eventual capacity to assume responsibilities from the international community with the inevitable withdrawal of MINUSTAH' (IADB 2012: 2). Moreover, Martelly told IADB representatives that he wants the government 'to be able to respond to natural disasters and help its reconstruction activities,' which would require engineering, medical, communications and logistics abilities. Martelly also 'highlighted the need for protecting borders and specifically mentioned capabilities to counter threats from transnational crime and drug trafficking' (IADB 2012: 2). Representatives of the IADB recommended in 2012 that Haiti ask for advice on the development of a national security strategy (IADB 2012: 2). The IADB at the time felt that 'real measurable progress is impeded by the lack of clear strategic direction and effective coordination...', making it 'important to understand the Government's overall National Security Strategy, and have a complete security sector evaluation and needs assessment' (IADB 2012: 3).

Following these meetings, Haiti's government launched a White Paper process with the support of the IADB, which included public consultations, albeit with a small and unrepresentative group of Port-au-Prince based experts. Participants included 'experts from the IADB, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Commission of Development of the White Paper, university professors and members of civil society' (*Haiti Libre* 2014). The role of the IADB in the White Paper process was described as helping to write technical policies, and involving other OAS representatives, including US

and Canadian defence officials, in the process.<sup>21</sup> In partnership with the IADB, Haiti's Ministry of Defence held a series of four workshops to develop the White Paper on Defence and Security of Haiti, the first of which was held in September 2014. On June 25, 2015, a ceremony was held to launch the White Paper. While it has not been released publicly, remarks by the Director General of the IADB at this event provided some hints as to its content. The Director General of the IADB Secretariat, Vice Admiral Bento Costa Lima Leite de Albuquerque Junior, called the White Paper, 'a document that goes beyond only security and defense, it incorporates the variable of economic development and social sustainability, all in one text' (IADB 2015).

The White Paper process is significant on several levels. First, one of its most important contributions will be to transition the reinstatement of the armed forces from an executive-led process to one grounded in a National Security Strategy. The new armed forces have been associated with the personal politics of former President Martelly from the beginning, not least because of his well-known associations with former military figures (see, for instance, Delva and Fletcher 2011).<sup>22</sup> The White Paper process has the potential to depersonalize the development of the armed forces. As one Senior Official in the Ministry of Defence noted in 2015, 'the Ministry is full of good ideas, good people, competent people, who are waiting for the green light of the president; the minister refuses to act without the green light from the president.'<sup>23</sup> In his view, one of the challenges was that President Martelly 'has a lot of interests; you have to wait for him to turn his attention to your area,' with the effect being that 'they are losing and have lost precious time that could be used to move forward.'<sup>24</sup> While this dynamic explains the slow development of the armed forces outside of the Ministry and the military engineers, it also highlights an important issue for the army's next phase of development. If Martelly was the driving force behind the army's development, what should the next government do to make sure it proceeds

in the right direction? In this sense, it is a positive sign that the White Paper process involved civil society leaders and Haitian intellectuals, rather than being limited to Martelly's inner circle or political party.

Second, the White Paper establishes a clear outline for the responsibilities and mandates of the country's security sector actors. As one report noted, the activation of the Ministry of Defence added 'another body to the confusion of institutions with often overlapping security responsibilities,' recommending that the *Conseil Supérieur de la Police Nationale* (CSPN) 'must clearly define the terms of reference of each, particularly for the supervision of and relations with the HNP' (ICG 2012: 6). The CSPN plays an advisory role on all major policy matters relating to the HNP (*Le Moniteur* 1994). The White Paper will help to create some conceptual clarity surrounding the security forces. The fact that the White Paper is associated with the OAS and the IADB means that questions relating to the armed forces could be referred back to those bodies.

While de-linking the executive from the armed forces is a sensible policy, and an empowered parliament may have the ability to tame any authoritarian tendencies Haiti's new president may have, the White Paper will ultimately be no more than a piece of paper unless it contributes to genuine changes in Haiti's security sector governance. In this sense, its greatest potential may lie in its ability to serve as an entry point for donors who come to see the need for a second armed force after the MINUSTAH withdrawal. The White Paper process provides an alternative outlet for international engagement, which allows donors to focus on security sector governance, depoliticization, oversight and accountability, rather than rushing to provide training and equipment.

## Conclusion

Haiti appears to be at a crossroads. The reinstatement of the Haitian armed forces is now a *fait accompli*. A sound system of governance for Haiti's security and justice

system—including both the police and the armed forces, but also the judiciary, ministerial control and parliamentary oversight mechanisms—is a crucial bulwark against a return to authoritarianism. There is a Haitian proverb that says '*konstitisyon se papye, bayonèt se fè*: a constitution is made of paper, a bayonet of iron' (Schuller 2015). In other words, laws and regulations do not define political reality in Haiti. While the White Paper and the Ministry of Defence's Development Plan paint a picture of a public service oriented military focused on natural disasters, medicine and protecting Haiti's forests, this may not prevent the army from later becoming coercive or politicized. The international community must help Haiti's government build deeper and stronger systems of accountability, oversight and strategic policymaking. Rather than withdrawing, the timing is right for the international community to further engage with Haiti's security sector. The Defence White Paper provides that opportunity.

The process to reinstate Haiti's army highlights some uncomfortable facts about local ownership and international stabilization missions. International donors, of course, have the right to choose which projects they will support financially and politically. This must be balanced with the right of the host nation to choose its own path. In Haiti, most donors and international organizations chose to disengage, largely leaving Haiti's government to pursue reinstatement alone. There are two realities here. First, the Haitian state remains dependant on donor largesse to function. The ability of donors to effectively stall the process of the army's development by withholding financial support underscores the power inequality between the country's sovereign government and the international community. What ownership does the Haitian government have over its SSR process if it is effectively unable to pursue programming, or at least severely constrained in its options, without the active support of its donors? Second, once the government demonstrated that it was determined to move forward

with reinstatement, the international community's decision to remain on the sidelines could constitute a missed opportunity to influence the development of a key security sector institution in its formative stages.

While it is likely that the development of the HNP will continue to occupy the majority of donor attention, a renewed focus should be placed on the governance, oversight and accountability of the security sector in general. With the eventual election of a new government, the timing is favourable for donors to pursue a security sector governance agenda. Strengthening the role of Haiti's parliament in the oversight of the security forces and building the capacity of the Ministry of Defence to be an effective and accountable institution, would be ways to contribute to the governance of Haiti's army without directly supporting the training of new recruits. Even if they are training non-combat units, countries like Ecuador and Brazil, who are actively engaged in training the security forces, should avoid a narrow focus on operational effectiveness. The training of senior, management personnel in human rights, governance and accountability should be a key aspect of any training arrangements.

The risk is that if this opportunity for engagement is not taken, Haiti's familiar pattern of authoritarianism and repression could repeat itself. While Michel Martelly is not permitted by Haitian law to hold consecutive terms, there is every reason to believe that he is not finished as a force in Haitian politics. Indeed, he told a journalist in 2016, that if there is 'continuity'—in other words, if his preferred candidate Jovenel Moïse wins the current round of elections—he could come back. The same journalist asked Moïse if he and Martelly had a twenty-year plan of alternating presidencies in mind, Moïse said: 'Yes. It's a good plan. We need stability. We need it' (Anderson 2016).

### Competing Interests

The author declares that they have no competing interests.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Fatton (2002 and 2007) provides an influential account on Haiti's political history.
- <sup>2</sup> Because the armed forces had been disbanded by decree, there were no major legal hurdles facing the Martelly administration in reconstituting the institution. It remained authorized by Haiti's Constitution.
- <sup>3</sup> For an excellent discussion of Haiti's military past, and Martelly's initial plans for reinstatement, see Boutellis (2011).
- <sup>4</sup> A regional organization that conducts biennial attitudinal surveys.
- <sup>5</sup> One report that has been reported to demonstrate that over 96 percent of Haitians oppose a second force was in fact asking whether former (demobilized) FAd'H members should ideally be responsible for security (see for instance Sprague 2012c). The data in question came from Kolbe and Muggah 2011: 243.
- <sup>6</sup> An estimated 70 percent of Haiti's population is under 30, while Haitians aged 15-to-29 alone make up 50 percent of the country's population (Muggah and Maguire 2010).
- <sup>7</sup> Interview with Haiti analyst, September 2, 2015 by phone.
- <sup>8</sup> Experts believe that the Haitian National Police would need to grow to approximately 20,000 to maintain stability on its own (Delva and Fletcher 2011).
- <sup>9</sup> Other analysis has stressed the likelihood that crime and security will deteriorate 'if MINUSTAH withdraws too early' (IHS Jane's 2015).
- <sup>10</sup> Interview with member of the Ministry of Defence cabinet, September 1, 2015, by phone.
- <sup>11</sup> Interview with member of the Ministry of Defence cabinet, September 1, 2015, by phone.
- <sup>12</sup> Interview with Arthur Boutellis, Director of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations, International Peace Institute (IPI), September 21, 2015, by phone.

- <sup>13</sup> The five strategic goals are: 1) The defence of Haiti's territorial integrity through the control of the country's land, sea and air borders; 2) Fight transnational organized crime; 3) Fight terrorism and cyber terrorism; 4) Protect the population against all forms of aggression and against natural disasters; and 5) Protect the environment against all risks and threats (monitoring forests, watersheds, mangroves and mining) (Ministry of National Defence 2013: 7). The armed forces is to be made up of five components: 1) A corps of engineers, 2) A mandatory civic service unit, envisaged as a means to promote employment for Haiti's youth, 3) An environmental unit / Forest Rangers, 4) A medical unit, and 5) A border unit (Ministry of National Defence 2013: 8).
- <sup>14</sup> Ecuador's training program began in October 2012, and by the end of 2013 had trained 41 Haitian engineers (*Haiti Libre* 2013). The Haitian students graduated from the Eloy Alfaro and Los Vencedores del Cenepa military training schools after completing ten months of training in Ecuador (*Caribbean News Now* 2014). They received training in repairing and constructing buildings, roads and sewer systems, surveying and using heavy construction equipment (*Diálogo* 2014). In May 2013, Brazil announced that it would train up to 500 Haitian students in Brazil and a further 1,000 in Haiti (*Diálogo* 2013).
- <sup>15</sup> Before 2012, the level of military spending in Haiti was effectively zero, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI 2015).
- <sup>16</sup> Interview with Arthur Boutellis, Director of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations, International Peace Institute (IPI), September 21, 2015, by phone.
- <sup>17</sup> See, for instance, Nathan (2007), Chesterman (2007), and Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli (2015).
- <sup>18</sup> Interview with Arthur Boutellis, Director of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations, International Peace Institute (IPI), September 21, 2015, by phone.
- <sup>19</sup> For a full discussion of the definition of ownership in SSR, see Donais (2008), Gordon (2014), Nathan (2007) and Mobekk (2010).
- <sup>20</sup> Author Interview, Senior Member of Ministry of Defence, 2015.
- <sup>21</sup> Interview with member of the Ministry of Defence cabinet, September 1, 2015, by phone.
- <sup>22</sup> Former president Martelly, who had appeared in public with former dictator Jean-Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier several times, called him an 'authentic son of Haiti' on Twitter after his death (*BBC News* 2014). He is reportedly close to Duvalier's son, Francois Nicolas Duvalier (Renois 2014).
- <sup>23</sup> Interview with member of the Ministry of Defence cabinet, September 1, 2015, by phone.
- <sup>24</sup> Interview with member of the Ministry of Defence cabinet, September 1, 2015, by phone.

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