

UN Peacekeeping Paramilitarism

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The world community calls them “Blue Helmets” or “peacekeepers,” and the UN defines their mission as “a way to help countries torn by conflict create conditions for sustainable peace” by implementing and monitoring post-conflict peace processes former combatants have agreed to under provisions of the UN Charter.

The Charter empowers the Security Council to take collective action to maintain international peace and security that includes authorizing peacekeeping operations provided a host country agrees to have them under Rules of Engagement developed and approved by all parties. At that point, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations enlists member nations to provide force contingents to be deployed once the Security Council gives final approval.

Once in place, Blue Helmets are supposed to help in various ways including monitoring the withdrawal of combatants, building confidence, enforcing power-sharing agreements, providing electoral support, aiding reconstruction, upholding the rule of law, maintaining order, and helping efforts toward economic and social development. Above all, “peacekeeping” missions are supposed to be benevolent interventions. They’re sent to conflict areas to restore order, maintain peace and security and provide for the needs of people during a transitional period until a local government takes over on its own.

Far too often, however, things don’t turn out that way, and Blue Helmets end up either creating more conflict than its resolution or being counterproductive or ineffective. In the first instance, peacekeepers become paramilitary enforcers for an outside authority. In the second, they do more harm than good because they’ve done nothing to ameliorate conditions or improve the situation on the ground and end up more a hindrance than a help. This article focuses mostly on the former using Haiti as the primary case study example after reviewing peacekeeping operations briefly in six other countries. In each case, the examples chosen show people on the ground as helpless victims of imperial exploitation (usually US-directed) with UN Blue Helmets used by outside powers for social control and domination, not keeping the peace.

First, a brief account of other failed “peacekeeping” missions is reviewed after an overview of the UN, its founding purpose and how the US dominates and undermines the world body for its own interests.

The UN - Its Founding Purpose and Mission

The UN was established in 1945 after WW II when 50 original member countries signed its Charter in San Francisco. Today 192 nations are member states. Its founding Charter states its purpose and mandate is: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of

war....reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights....(support) equal rights of men and women....of nations large and small....establish conditions under which justice....can be maintained....promote social progress....practice tolerance and live in peace (and promote) economic and social advancement of all peoples.” From its founding date till now, the world body failed on all counts even though some of its agencies (like UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and UNESCO) have a history of providing important services in areas of health, education, food assistance, aiding refugees, social development and more.

Nonetheless, the UN is hamstrung by a serious obstacle. Its dominant member is the US that undermines the world body’s authority and effectiveness for its own imperial interests. It does it through its Security Council veto power, by withholding dues, disengaging from UN activities or just muscling or bribing member states to get its way. It gets away with it by being the world’s leading economic, political and military superpower beholden to no interests but its own. It takes full advantage, and for over half a century used the UN as its foreign policy instrument or rendered it ineffective by inaction or obstruction. If allowed to be a voice for all member states, the UN could be a powerful one for global democratic governance and promotion of social equity and equal justice. Instead one dominant nation’s veto power trumped the will of all others causing a shameful history of UN failure and ineffectiveness. As long as a single nation’s monkey wrench can jam its works, the UN will never fulfill its founding purpose.

It’s apparent in its Charter-mandated peacekeeping role. If the UN functioned as a neutral international body pursuing its founding mission, it would always act to establish and maintain peace in every conflict area. It doesn’t because its dominant member won’t let it. So it failed to act when Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 slaughtering hundreds of thousands in a secretly US-authorized aggression including the arming and supporting of Indonesian military TNI forces. It stood by again after the East Timorese voted by referendum for independence in 1999 after which TNI forces attacked and slaughtered thousands more.

The UN did nothing during South Africa’s border wars and invasion of Namibia in the 1960s and 70s and allowed a 36 year civil war to go on in Guatemala following the CIA fomented coup in 1954 ousting the country’s democratically elected leader Jacobo Arbenz Guzman. It ignored a succession of oppressive military and civilian governments still ruling the country. It allowed them to compile the hemisphere’s worst human rights record even after the UN brokered a Peace Accord formally ending the civil conflict mainly against the country’s indigenous Mayan majority slaughtering 200,000 of them. It still ignores the government’s shameless human rights abuses in a country Amnesty International calls a “land of injustice.” But it happens to be one the US considers a close ally, and that’s all that counts as Washington has the final say on most everything at the UN.

These are a few of the many examples of UN failures to address injustice throughout the world on every continent. It belies discredited former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s standing up for the Security Council claiming it has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It can’t even prevent human rights abuses because it’s mostly a talking shop, and the world body overall is a wholly owned subsidiary of the nation where its headquartered. It uses it to pursue its imperial agenda knowing no nation will dare try stopping it most often. And when the threat arises, Washington ignores it to do what it pleases like attacking Iraq without required Security Council approval and threatening now to extend the conflict to Iran on blatantly false cooked up charges that smell as bad as the WMD ones about its occupied neighbor.

UN Peacekeeping Operations

UN peacekeeping operations began in 1948 with its first one ever UNTSO mission to monitor the Arab-Israeli first of two brief failed truces in Israel's "War of Independence" beginning in June, 1948. The operation is still ongoing, peace was never achieved, the UN plays no active role, and UNTSO wastes money and takes up space observing and reporting what it wishes selectively while Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have total control of everything on the ground. UNTSO ineffectiveness shows in the way the IDF continues repressing and assaulting defenseless Palestinians while the UN gets out of their way functioning as little more than worthless window dressing. In 2006 it had a meager staff of 371 military and civilian observers and a budget of \$30 million, all of which could have been better spent elsewhere on a real mission for a real purpose if there are any.

That inauspicious start was symbolic of what lay ahead in 61 total peacekeeping missions undertaken to date ignoring all the other conflicts it should have intervened in but didn't. Currently 16 missions are ongoing as of year end 2006 plus two other small special political and/or peacebuilding ones with 113 countries contributing 99,817 military troops, observers, police and civilians budgeted for the 12 months through June, 2007 at \$4.75 billion under names like UNIFIL in Lebanon created in 1978 for the same purpose it's still there for and now enlarged following Israel's withdrawal from the country last summer after its horrific invasion and assault weeks earlier.

UNIFIL Blue Helmets in Lebanon

Israel attacked and invaded Lebanon last July 12 following Hezbollah's cross-border incursion that was used as a pretext to ignite pre-planned aggression against the country and its people. The result was mass killing, crippling destruction, and a huge refugee problem all without Israel achieving its planned aim - to destroy Hezbollah resistance in South Lebanon. It proved too much for the world's fifth most powerful military equipped with state-of-the-art weaponry courtesy of the most powerful Washington-based one.

UNIFIL was established to restore and maintain peace in South Lebanon one week after Israel's invasion of the country in March, 1978. It's been there since including throughout the period from 1982 when Israel again invaded and remained until withdrawing its forces in May, 2000. Despite its mandate, UNIFIL never established peace and security and did little more than take up space allowing the IDF free reign to control everything on the ground along with its proxy Christian South Lebanon Army acting as paramilitary enforcer thugs of a largely Shia Muslim population.

"Proxy" describes UNIFIL's current role in Lebanon that has little to do with keeping peace and everything to do with being NATO's Israel enforcer. In that role, it can engage Hezbollah in confrontation if it chooses and do Israel's fighting and dying for it. It also represents a continuation of nearly three decades of "peacekeeping" failure in South Lebanon. The current one won't work any better than all efforts preceding it because UNIFIL is beholden to Israel, the US and NATO and will follow their mandate having nothing to do with peace and stability and everything to do with imperial control and dominance. The people of South Lebanon know all about UNIFIL's "benefits," but you won't hear them say thank you.

UNAMIR in Rwanda

UNAMIR was set up to help implement the Arusha Accords in 1993 to ease tensions, secure

the capital, and monitor a ceasefire and security agreement prior to the outbreak of ethnic slaughter that began after CIA surface-to-air missiles shot down the aircraft carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira in April, 1994. That “unfortunate” plane accident made way for US-trained Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) Major-General Paul Kagame to take power so Washington could use the country as a base to pursue its greater prize in resource-rich Congo (DRC). It didn’t matter that hundreds of thousands died and millions in Congo where war subsided, but instability remains because warring sides and Western interests still contest for control of the country’s immense resources.

Canadian General Romeo Dallaire led a UN 400 troop contingent in Rwanda, got no additional force help, mostly stood aside as thousands were slaughtered, and was only authorized to act in self-defense meaning his orders were do nothing. He left the country in August, 1994 followed by the departure of his replacements when UNAMIR’s mandate ended in 1996 long after the damage was done. The result – a dismal mission failure in UN peacekeeping with hundreds of thousands dead because Blue Helmets were told to ignore it.

UNMIK in Kosovo

UNMIK was created in 1999 for war-torn Kosovo as an interim civilian administration to remain in place until the Serbian province’s fate is decided. Its stated mission includes maintaining the rule of law, protecting human rights, coordinating humanitarian and disaster relief, supporting reconstruction efforts, and assuring refugees and displaced persons can return to their homes. As always, stated goals are noble, but results shameful – another mission failure staying longer will just exacerbate, not ameliorate.

The mission language hides the grim history of the 1990s Balkan wars. They destroyed a nation making its new pieces easy pickings for US and Western imperial exploitation and control. It had nothing to do with removing a “bad guy” Serbian leader and everything to do with installing new leadership more responsive to Western interests – meaning unconditional surrender to imperial authority. The US-led 1999 NATO assault was called a humanitarian intervention. It’s real aim was to finish breaking one nation into six more easily handled ones plus deciding the fate of Serbia’s Kosovo province to be dealt with later.

In Kosovo, Washington and NATO collaborated with Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) paramilitary thugs ignoring their connection to organized crime. They got free reign to commit terrorist attacks including ethnic cleansing of Serbs and other minorities in the province. The US-led war caused massive population displacement, not the other way around as news reports claimed. Nor did the war bring Kosovo peace and stability. Far from it. The province is part of Serbia, and Serbs want to keep it that way. But it looks like they won’t as Albanians in the majority have other ideas with assurance their US ally will help them.

After the war, the former Serbian province got semi-autonomy as a UN protectorate with its final status nearly decided by the world body intending to make Kosovo semi-independent because the US wants it that way. It doesn’t matter what Serbs want for territory they’re about to lose. The scheme was unveiled on January 26 to the six-member contact group of major powers including the US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Russia all of whom approve except Russia that remains skeptical enough to try to scuttle the plan. It supports Serbia that rejects the deal but has little power to stop it unless Russia vetoes it in the Security

Council with final say on the matter.

That verdict isn't in yet, but some things are clear. Whatever Kosovo's nominal disposition, Serbs will be losers and US and Western imperial control will continue by virtue of a proxy repressive UNMIK/NATO Blue Helmet contingent remaining in place for an indefinite time likely to be lengthy. It's how imperial management works. People lose out so hegemony can win, and when it involves the US the price paid is big and painful.

MONUC in the Democratic Republic of Congo

MONUC began its operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 1999 and is the largest peacekeeping force now in place but one hardly adequate (if it mattered) for a country the size of Western Europe. MONUC was authorized to monitor a ceasefire agreement between warring sides as well as be involved in the usual kinds of things peacekeeping entails. After years of unresolved conflict, few places anywhere need peace and stability more than DRC in the wake of the country's long-running war taking 4 million or more lives causing immeasurable human misery and harm.

All along, the UN was inept, counterproductive and out of the loop. It was more part of the problem than its solution. It knew all about legal and illegal arms trading fueling conflict but didn't stop it because its controlling members did the selling like they always do in war zones everywhere. In addition, Blue Helmets weren't where most needed and didn't help when able because direct orders said not to. Kofi Annan was part of the problem as he was as UN head of peacekeeping in 1994 allowing Rwandans to be slaughtered when his efforts at least might have ameliorated conditions. Instead, he kept his mouth shut and head down, refusing to act as he later did as Secretary-General serving imperial interests he was beholden to. That meant ignoring desperate people in Congo and all other warring regions.

The DRC is a major one even though things are mostly quieted down - for now. The country's cursed by being the likely most resource-rich piece of real estate in the world (except for not having large oil reserves). That makes it a key target for imperial exploitation and control with Congo's people suffering just by being there. Sending Blue Helmets to keep peace is just a fig leaf hiding the dark side of the conflict and who stands to gain with US interests always topping the list and acting as guarantor nothing interferes with what Washington has in mind.

So all parties ignore the situation on the ground, and Blue Helmets just make it worse. The evidence shows UN forces engaged in sex trafficking, using children as prostitutes. They abused young girls and got away with it because MONUC officials took no preventive action in spite of pious claims decrying it. What's common in Congo happens everywhere with so-called "peacekeepers" acting as thuggish enforcers for imperial powers. Their mission is "keeping the rabble in line" with free reign to do it harshly as long as it's kept under wraps. What happens in Congo goes on in Kosovo, Liberia, Sudan (discussed below) and Haiti also discussed in detail shortly. It's an ugly story of crackdown, repression or indifference hidden under the cover of "peacekeeping."

UNMIS in Sudan

UNMIS was established in 2005 to implement the January, 2005 Comprehensive Peace Treaty between the Sudanese government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army. It ended the protracted North-South 22 year civil war killing and uprooting millions in one of

the continent's most costly wars, but not freeing the nation from conflict still ongoing in Darfur. UNMIS has authority to administer there once hostilities subside, warring sides allow them entry and agree to cooperate, and Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir decides if he's willing to risk a regional occupying force hostile to his interests. Currently a 7,000 force African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) operates in Darfur that's pathetically slim for an area the size of France in a country the size of Western Europe.

The Sudanese government is justifiably reluctant for Blue Helmets to come knowing how they behave elsewhere. It also knows what fuels the conflict and what interests the US and West in the area. Like most everywhere, it's about valuable resources, and in Darfur it's mainly oil as it is in Somalia where Washington is involved in another proxy war with US supportive air and ground involvement this time using an Ethiopian force to be supplemented or replaced by other regional country contingent "peacekeepers."

The Darfur conflict is falsely portrayed in Western media reports as atrocities committed by Arab Janjawid militias supported by the Khartoum government against black African people. The truth is all parties involved are indigenous Arabic-speaking black Sunni Muslims involved in intertribal fighting over increasingly scarce water and grazing rights in an area hard hit by draught and famine. If Blue Helmets come in, they'll make things worse because they'll be sent for imperial control further harming the people enduring more than they can already handle.

MINUSTAH in Haiti - Our Main Focus

Since European settlers first arrived in Haiti 500 years ago, this nation experienced an almost unparalleled legacy of colonial violence and exploitation. Even when the country gained freedom from France on January 1, 1804, it lay in ruins. Its plantations and sugar works were burned and large parts of its cities were rubble from many years of conflict. It cost the nation half its population of former slaves on top of its indigenous population nearly exterminated by Spanish Conquistadors beginning with the arrival of Columbus.

Things got no better when Spain kept the Eastern two-thirds of the island in what's now the Dominican Republic leaving the Western third for French colonization beginning in the early 1600s. France brought over black African slaves controlling it till after the 1789 French Revolution that inspired Haitians to wage theirs for the same freedoms French people got briefly. Led by Toussaint L'Overture, they prevailed establishing the first free independent black republic anywhere on their New Years liberation day in 1804.

It was short-lived as France regained control holding it till America took over later solidifying its regional lock when Woodrow Wilson sent in Marines in 1915 to protect US investments, doing it in typical US fashion - at the barrel of a gun. Nineteen years of brutal exploitation followed with massacres like the kinds seen in Haiti today. The worst of them was in 1929 when US Marines slaughtered 264 protesting peasants in Les Cayes. There were also smaller incursions, forced labor, and aerial bombing years before the Nazis' infamous attack on Spain's Republican government at Guernica supporting opposition fascist dictator, Francisco Franco.

Except for a decade of relief under Jean-Bertrand Aristide and Rene Preval, nothing improved for Haitians after US occupiers left in 1934. Aristide and Preval brought hope in spite of great Western constraint imposed on them. It didn't last courtesy of US Marines again ending a brief grace period of relief and deliverance for people having precious little of it for

500 years.

In its wake, MINUSTAH was established by UN Security Council vote on April 30, 2004 two months after the US-led coup ousted President Aristide now in forced exile in South Africa. From inception, it's mission was flawed as it had no right being there in the first place. Blue Helmets, in principle, are deployed for peace and stability even though they seldom bring it. In this case, peacekeepers have may been illegally sent for the first time ever supporting and enforcing a coup d'etat against a democratically elected president instead of staying out of it or coming to back his right to office.

The US runs everything in Haiti, and MINUSTAH became its repressive arm against Haitian people wanting their President back and their freedoms under him restored. The result is no surprise. MINUSTAH's mission is disastrous, disgraceful and in violation of the rule of law including UN's own Charter as explained below.

Before it began, the UN lied claiming Aristide was less than democratically reelected in 2000 with under 10% of Haitians participating. UN officials further implied his Fanmi Lavalas party manipulated results allowing him to win. The truth was otherwise showing Aristide won with a 92% majority and a turnout of around 62% of eligible voters or a figure exceeding that in most US elections. The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) suggested turnout was even higher, but mainstream reporting never lets facts conflict with official US government versions of truth that hide it when it isn't the kind it wants.

The line on Haiti came from the US State Department's affiliated Agency for International Development (USAID) claiming the opposition boycotted the election and Aristide won by default with a low voter turnout. This got reported as anti-Aristide black propaganda contradicting mass-Haitian support for a beloved leader twice elected the country's President. Haitians demand his return but won't get it as long as the US remains in charge. Washington will ignite a firestorm if he tries coming setting off the kind of ugliness leading to what happened in February, 2004 that repeated similar events in September, 1991 after Aristide's first election. The result for Haitians is nightmarish courtesy of the Bush administration with complicit Security Council support in the form of Blue Helmet "peacekeepers" enforcing their kind of peace.

They're on the ground along with mobilized death squads, otherwise known as the hated Haitian National Police (PNH), acting as a main duel proxy force serving their masters in Washington. They've done it by destroying all democratic freedoms in a country subjugated for 500 years under outside authority or one imposed on them from within. In 1990, Haitians hoped it ended when they elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide President with 67% of the vote. He took office in February, 1991, but his tenure was short-lived. It ended in September by the first of two US-instigated coups removing him from office for a more compliant military ruler beholden to Washington and its capital interests.

Aristide returned to Haiti in 1994 regaining nominal power through a deal Clinton officials arranged. It included a largely US-led UN peacekeeping force remaining until 1999 to assure political and economic continuity by IMF-imposed neoliberal structural adjustment policy diktats of privatizations, debt serving and cuts in vitally needed social services. Under these conditions and with little financial support when he tried going around them, Aristide governed like a social democrat compiling an impressive record given the constraints on him. Under Haitian law, he was unable to succeed himself in 1996, but his ally Rene Preval ran for President and won with an 88% majority. Aristide then ran again in 2000 winning big

as explained above.

From then until 2004, Aristide instituted a host of important programs in areas of health, education, justice and human rights. He did it by maneuvering around the kinds of harsh dictates imposed on him out of Washington. It led to his second ouster reinstating a US-directed reign of terror with MINUSTAH Blue Helmet proxies in the lead implementing harsh repression still ongoing and unaddressed by a world community mindful of conditions but turning a blind eye or playing a supportive role. Blue Helmets do this everywhere, but it gets no worse than in Haiti. It's the poorest country in the hemisphere, conditions continue getting worse, people are suffering, and MINUSTAH is there to keep it that way, not bring peace, security, stability or freedom to people desperately needing it.

It's all about the rules of imperial management Washington forces on all nations but especially ones with strategically important resources, markets or in the case of Haiti cheap labor. Haiti has lots of it, and it's some of the cheapest in the world. It's an offshore US manufacturer's paradise where many garment and other workers earn as little as 12 cents an hour or near-slave wages. It's far below the poverty level even in Haiti, and after transportation and other expenses an average Haitian worker earns around \$6 a week for those able to get any work in a country plagued by high unemployment running as high as 50% and at times much higher. During his tenure, President Aristide alleviated this and much more in spite of great constraints on him. He did it with scant outside help in spite of overwhelming pressures from Washington not to do anything affecting capital interests.

With him gone and reelected President Rene Preval hamstrung under foreign occupation masquerading as "peacekeepers," Haitians have lost everything. Conditions have never been worse, and it goes on daily in Haiti's bloodstained streets patrolled by MINUSTAH, PNH and militarized gangs of enforcers with license to kill and brutalize freely. The Western media ignore it in a country the US controls as a de facto colony using violence for social control just like in Iraq with its own and proxy Iraqi forces.

Guatemalan UN Special Envoy Edmond Mulet calls it needing to "liberate" neighborhoods from "thugs, criminals, gangs (and) drug dealers." He characterizes indiscriminate killing of unarmed civilians as "collateral damage" with UN forces coming "under attack (from gangs in Cite Soleil)." What he won't address is MINUSTAH'S role as enforcer to make Haiti safe for predatory capitalism with harsh repression the method of choice to do it. It's aim is to destroy all vestiges of democratic Lavalas and Jean-Bertrand Aristide's influence, but it resulted in mass-people resistance on the streets protesting their plight and demanding restitution of their rights as free people. Their answer is armed attacks and regular assaults.

It goes on daily with punishing effects against helpless people. They're led by Blue Helmet thugs attacking Haitians in impoverished areas like Cite Soleil, Bel Air, Solino and elsewhere indiscriminately killing men, women and children. They work with PNH enforcers incarcerating or murdering Aristide supporters and advocates for freedom and justice, forcing many others underground or to flee the country even after Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party was effectively destroyed.

Before Preval's reelection last February, MINUSTAH helped reinstitute Haiti's brutal and hated former military that Aristide disbanded and put Haiti again at the mercy of predatory international lending agencies. It also worked with the so-called Interim Government of Haiti (IGH) under US-installed puppet prime minister Gerard Latortue ending Aristide's social programs and returning the country to capital interests with lots of infused cash ending up

in the pockets of the interim government Transparency International (TI) called the most corrupt in the world, but not enough to bother its US boss looking the other way and ignoring it. The IGH even locked up dissenters and emptied prisons of real criminals for service in the PNH. It also reconstituted Haiti's military and allowed private paramilitary gangs to operate as brutish enforcers of their own defenseless people.

It's gone on since the 2004 coup in splendid fashion through bloody street crackdowns including massacres against people protesting their plight in a country returned to serfdom under repressive overlords. Haiti is short on law, order, justice and freedom and long on paramilitary thuggishness keeping things that way including the private paramilitary ones like the Little Machete Army that was implicated in the July 6, 2006 Grand Ravine massacre of more than 20 people along with burning scores of houses in an act of pure savagery. It was after the August 21, 2005 slaughter in a Grand Ravine soccer field in front of 5000 fans when as many as 50 people were shot or hacked to death with machetes by PNH thugs and red-shirted killers.

A recent horrific incident happened in the early morning hours of December 22, 2006 in Cite Soleil when UN Blue Helmets assaulted the community killing more than 30 people with some reports claiming much higher numbers. It happened in random mass shooting striking people everywhere including in their homes with bullets easily penetrating paper-thin walls. The UN claimed it was after a young man named Belony, supposedly the head of a kidnapping gang, but the story is pure "baloney" like all other MINUSTAH ones. It's UN's way to justify repression and killings saying it's targeting bandits that are really ordinary Haitians protesting their misery or who happen to be in the line of fire that's deliberately indiscriminate as an added form of terror.

Disturbingly, President Rene Preval apparently approved the December 22 operation and now has blood on his hands to answer for. He likely knew it's purpose was to punish an impoverished community that put 10,000 people on the streets a few days earlier demonstrating for the return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide and condemning a US-directed militarized occupation of their country. Video footage and eye witnesses captured and verified the retaliatory response on the streets with unarmed civilians shot by random gunfire including from helicopter gunships. At first the UN denied it but finally admitted what video footage and digital photos showed conclusively. They also showed wounded and dying with no medical help on the scene and people left to bleed to death on the streets or in their homes.

This assault was like an earlier one against Cite Soleil on July 6, 2005 when UN forces attacked the city with hundreds of heavily armed troops using M-50s and 60s mounted on armored personnel vehicles. It also used high-powered telescopic rifles for accuracy in singling out targeted dissenters for assassination and a type of gattling gun firing armor-piercing bullets believed to be depleted uranium tipped to slice through metal like butter. This time about 70 people were shot indiscriminately from thousands of rounds of ammunition fired. Again those hit were left to bleed to death unattended on the streets or in their homes.

A more recent documented incident happened in Cite Soleil on January 23, 2007 with MINUSTAH forces again randomly shooting for hours including from helicopters while people ran for their lives or were gunned down indiscriminately as they did. No accurate count of casualties is known so far, and the number killed may never be known as Blue Helmets often remove bodies to conceal the extent of their handiwork. Another attack followed on

January 24 with MINUSTAH acknowledging it killed six people and wounded others in the same targeted community. Haitians won't ever be free of this until peacekeepers leave, Blue Helmet terrorism ends and people can choose their own leaders, free from outside control, or not live under ones imposed on them.

For now, that seems light years away, and all reports out of Haiti are grim including a January 23 one by the National Bishops' Justice and Peace Commission (JILAP), a human rights commission of Haiti's Roman Catholic church. It reported at least 539 people died violently in Port-au-Prince alone in the three month period ending December 31, 2006 with the true number likely higher as it only counted dead bodies on the streets. Most of the victims were in impoverished communities like Cite Soleil, Grand Ravine, Martissant and Bolosse, and the main cause of death was from gunshot wounds. JILAP also attributed most of the violence to MINUSTAH and PNH with most deaths just local residents in targeted areas. Other violence was blamed on street gangs like the one led by the Little Machete Army that may have murdered Haitian independent journalist Jean Remy Badiou in Martissant because he "dared practice journalism in a country where the press (today) is never free."

Sadly, Haitians have no freedom because the extent of occupation-led terror is greater than Haiti's ever had in its 200 year history as a sovereign state. It amounts to collective punishment of an impoverished people living under US-imposed police state type daily killings, massacres, rapes, arbitrary arrests, mass incarcerations, beatings and horrific immiseration of millions of people defenseless against it. It also includes human trafficking of women and children for forced prostitution and men and women for forced labor amounting to chattel slavery. Additional thousands of men have been forcibly taken to the Dominican Republic and other regional countries to work for wages so low they're called "sugar slaves."

Still more abuse came out in the September, 2006 Lancet reported study conducted by Wayne State University, School of Social Work researchers Athena Kolbe and Dr. Royce Hutson. They exposed and documented massive human rights violations in Haiti under the puppet Latortue government using random Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinate sampling of 1260 households and 5720 individuals. 90.7% of them were interviewed using a structured questionnaire by trained interviewers to learn about their experiences since Aristide's ouster.

The study findings estimated 8,000 people were murdered and about 35,000 women (over half under 18) sexually assaulted in the greater Port-au-Prince area between February, 2004 and December, 2005. 21% of killings were attributed to the PNH, 13% to the demobilized army and another 13% to anti-Aristide paramilitary gangs like the Little Machete Army. Known criminals were the worst sex offenders, but officers from the HNP accounted for 13.8% of assaults and armed anti-Lavalas groups another 10.6%. The report also documented kidnappings, extrajudicial detentions, physical assaults other than rape, death threats, physical threats and threats of sexual violence against helpless people.

The report concluded that "crime and systematic abuse of human rights were common in Port-au-Prince" involving criminals but also "political actors and UN (Blue Helmet) soldiers." It also stressed an overwhelming need on the ground for attention to "legal, medical, psychological, and economic consequences of widespread human rights abuses and crime."

The study ended in December, 2005, but the same abuses go on daily in Haitian

communities around Port-au-Prince and elsewhere in the country. It's a picture of UN failure and its top officials and Secretary-General corrupted and criminally complicit with its authorized missions' worst crimes and abuses going on everywhere. It also shows the world body as a servant of power, defiling its founding mandate and damning the poor and weak to pay for its failure to protect them. Nowhere are things worse than in Haiti, and nowhere are UN representatives more culpable starting at the top where the buck stops with its former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. His tenure ended in December as it began - in disgrace but whose record went unreported because he served power interests well who'll now reward him in his new endeavors.

Haitians hoped things might not be this way last February 7 when they reelected Rene Preval their President in an electoral process orchestrated, controlled and rigged by the US-installed puppet government but not enough to override the will of the people. For the first time in two years, desperate Haitians had reason to celebrate with a leader again in charge who once served their needs as President. But nothing is ever simple in Haiti, and long knives in Washington were out to undermine and destabilize Preval's rule from its outset or simply work around him and ignore it. The result to date is capital rules the country, and Rene Preval has little to show for his first year in office. Haitians continue suffering, and 9,000 repressive Blue Helmets, PNH and other paramilitaries are on the ground keeping it that way.

It affects the lives of helpless people in ways beyond brute force and economic deprivation. Blue Helmet attacks in Cite Soleil severely damaged the community's public water system as random gunfire hit pipelines and a water tower. It forced area residents to walk long distances with heavy buckets for what's unavailable close by while private speculators truck in drinking water for sale at prices Cite Soleil's half million residents can't afford. It's one more part of marketplace rule leaving most Haitians out of it with no resources to participate.

The UN peacekeeping mandate expires on February 15, but Haitians won't see the end of it. The Security Council is about to extend the mission with disagreement over its length that comes up for review every six months. Before leaving office, Kofi Annan recommended a year's extension, but unanimity hasn't yet been reached by Security Council members. When it is, it won't reflect the peoples' will demanding Blue Helmets leave that's loudly heard on the streets and ignored as it always is.

Protests and demonstrations are on the capital's streets all the time, but a major one happened on February 7 as well as in six other Haitian cities and many around the world in solidarity. They dramatically dispelled the UN's false assertions that Lavalas is dead. It lives, it's vibrant, and it puts a lie to UN Envoy Edmond Mulet's claim that "the issue of former President Aristide is not present anymore....in Haiti....and his (Fanmi Lavalas) movement is very much divided, weakened."

The date marked the 16th anniversary of Jean-Bertrand Aristide's first inauguration as Haiti's first elected President in 1991 and 21st anniversary of the end of the hated Duvalier father-son dictatorship in 1986. Tens of thousands of Fanmi Lavalas supporters took to the streets peacefully to protest their occupation and violence from it. They called for the release of all political prisoners and demanded return of those in forced exile starting with their former President deposed on February 29, 2004. Protestors joined with them in solidarity in 53 cities around the world on five continents against Blue Helmet massacres in an "International Day in Solidarity with the Haitian People." On the same day, protesters

went to Haiti's UN heavily guarded Port-au-Prince military headquarters demanding Aristide's return and confronting soldiers with shouts of "Down with the UN." Hundreds were back the following day repeating their chants and risking the kind of retaliation they've come to expect before.

They got their answer on February 9 when hundreds of UN peacekeepers again raided Cite Soleil before dawn continuing their ritualized crackdown and retaliation against courageous people resistance. It's made Blue Helmets a hated symbol of imperial repression and all the terror from it. For Haitian people, it's just the latest chapter in their 500 year struggle never losing hope one day they'll be free at last. No people deserve it more than do Haitians.

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