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ACTION WHA-00

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(A), 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	USNW-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
	DODE-00	PERC-00	DS-00	EAP-00	EUR-00	H-00	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	M-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00	OES-00
	OIC-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	GIWI-00	FMPC-00
	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	BBG-00	R-00	EPAE-00
	IIP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/002W				

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P 262051Z JUL 05
 FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0519
 INFO HAITI COLLECTIVE
 AMCONSUL QUEBEC
 HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
 USMISSION GENEVA
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
 USDAO PORT AU PRINCE HA
 USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 001919

SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
 WHA ALSO FOR USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/2015
 TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PREL, HA
 SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS DISPUTE CIVILIAN CASUALTY
 NUMBERS FROM JULY 6 MINUSTAH RAID

REF: PAP 1796

Classified By: Ambassador James B. Foley for Reasons 1.5(B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY. Human rights organizations continue to dispute the number of civilian casualties from the MINUSTAH operation in Cite Soleil on July 6 (reftel). Some local human rights groups estimate the number of deaths attributed to MINUSTAH soldiers between six and ten, while others maintain that between 50 to 70 people were killed on that day. Pro-Aristide affiliated human rights organizations are calling it a massacre by the UN. MINUSTAH have allowed charges of a massacre perpetrated by the peacekeeping force to fester, but they released a statement on July 25 stating that their forces did not intentionally target civilians.
 END SUMMARY.

MINUSTAH's After Action Report ---

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, L. R. LOHMAN, DAS, A/RPS
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: MELVIN E SINN
 CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(A), 1.4(B), 1.4(D)
 DECLASSIFY AFTER: 19 JUL 2015
 DATE/CASE ID: 02 JUN 2006 200505081

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2. (C) In the early morning of July 6, MINUSTAH launched an operation into the Bois Neuf area of Cite Soleil, killing gang leader Dred Wilme and five of his associates. In the days following the operation, MINUSTAH spokespersons confirmed the death toll at six and an internal UN briefing held by the operation field commander confirmed that number.

3. [redacted] were the main participants in the operation. The [redacted] raided Wilme's house under fire, killing Wilme and five others. The [redacted] used armored personnel carriers to block exits on Bois Neuf and engaged some gang members. The [redacted] received heavy fire and conducted house to house clearing operations along Impasse Chavanne and National Route 9. MINUSTAH's after action report stated that the firefight lasted over seven hours during which time their forces expended over 22,000 rounds of ammunition and received heavy fire in return. A [redacted] with MINUSTAH acknowledged that, given the flimsy construction of homes in Cite Soleil and the large quantity of ammunition expended, it is likely that rounds penetrated many buildings, striking unintended targets. As the operation was a raid, MINUSTAH did not remain in the area to do an assessment of civilian or gang member casualties, nor were they able to recover any of the gang members' bodies. However, several of their vehicles absorbed multiple rounds during the operation.

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Some Groups Immediately Claimed Massacre ---

4. (C) Immediately after the operation, varying accounts of the operation and of the number of casualties began circulating on pro-Aristide internet propaganda listserves. On July 11, the Haitian Lawyer's Leadership Network (HLLN) headed by Haitian-American Aristide partisan Marguerite Laurent took the lead on spreading massacre rumors on the internet. On her website, Laurent cited conclusions of an investigation conducted by a San Francisco-based labor and human rights delegation which claimed video evidence of the massacre. They further claimed that UN troops tear gassed homes and shot retreating Haitians in the back, citing "systematic firing on civilians". The report also stated that UN helicopters opened fire from the air [redacted]

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5. (U) At St. Joseph's hospital near Cite Soleil, Doctors Without Borders Reported receiving 26 gunshot victims from Cite Soleil on July 6, of whom 20 were women and at least one was a child. The labor and human rights delegation from San Francisco was in Haiti at the time and toured Cite Soleil after the operation. Seth Donnelly, a member of the delegation, gave an interview to Democracy Now in which he claimed that video evidence of the massacre would be forthcoming, and he set the death toll at close to 30.

6. (U) During their tour of the area, he reported that the public freely approached their group and told them of their fondness for Wilme and their feeling of hopelessness. The people of Cite Soleil showed them various victims' homes and bodies, but they apparently made no mention of resistance by Wilme or others in the area. According to Donnelly, General

Heleno stated in a meeting with the delegation that the Jordanian battalion had led the operation. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Other groups, including the Haiti Information Project, the Haiti Action Committee, and Workers World seized on these reports and issued similar condemnations of the UN while posting photos of the victims on their websites. According to these groups, Dread Wilme was a father figure to his community who was committed to peace. (Note: [REDACTED] MINUSTAH has documented evidence of scores of attacks perpetrated on its forces by Dread Wilme. End note).

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Upon Further Investigation ---

7. (U) The Haitian National Network for the Defense of Human Rights spoke with families of victims and returned a more balanced report. It confirmed the number of victims received at St. Joseph's but reduced the number of Haitians killed during the operation to not more than 12, including Dread Wilme. The Network also reported that many reprisal killings had since taken place in Cite Soleil of persons suspected of cooperating with MINUSTAH, though Post has been unable to independently confirm these reports.

8. (U) In an open letter to SRSV Valdes, CARLI, the Coalition of Lawyers for Respect of Individual Liberties, demanded an explanation from MINUSTAH and the HNP of how their operation could have resulted in so much unintended human and proprietary damage, stating that several Haitian innocent civilians had been killed. CARLI affirmed that the security forces needed to continue to enforce stability, but stated that they must also take into account the extreme

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poverty, defenselessness, and basic needs of Haiti's poorest citizens.

MINUSTAH's HR Office ---

9. (C) The UN human rights office has been unable to confirm any reports because their monitors still do not have secure access to the area. A July 25 statement from MINUSTAH stated: "MINUSTAH forces did not target civilians in the operation on 6 July, but the nature of such missions in densely populated urban areas is such that there is always a risk of civilian casualties. MINUSTAH deeply regrets any injuries or loss of life during its security operation." The statement went on to accuse Cite Soleil gang members of carrying out reprisal killings on suspected informants and attributing them to MINUSTAH.

10. (C) COMMENT. It is noteworthy that Heleno attributed the operation to Jordanian troops in his meeting with Mr. Donnelly's group, when MINUSTAH's after action report states that the Jordanians played only a minor role, providing perimeter security and firing approximately five percent of the rounds. It remains unclear how aggressive MINUSTAH was, though 22,000 rounds is a large amount of ammunition to have killed only six people. MINUSTAH has allowed rumors of a massacre to continue by not countering with a sufficiently transparent account of the resistance they encountered in carrying out the operation; resistance that included coordinated "fire and maneuver" tactics by gang members and at least 4 molotov cocktails (a Chilean engineering truck emerged from the operation with 41 bullet holes). It seems likely that civilians were killed and wounded in the operation, but the report of "systematic firing on civilians" is completely unsubstantiated. The picture that emerges from this operation is that of a Cite Soleil completely controlled by gangs who are able to turn any story to their advantage and can easily manipulate public opinion, and [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] END COMMENT.

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