Securing the State
HAITI BEFORE AND AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

8

INTRODUCTION

On 12 January 2010, a devastating earthquake killed an estimated 158,000 people in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, and displaced 1.3 million more.[1] In its wake, the nation's first cholera epidemic killed more than 3,700 and infected another 185,000.[2] The international community pledged more than USD 10 billion towards rebuilding the country. As of January 2011, however, less than one-tenth of this sum had been disbursed in Haiti.[3]

The costs of the natural disaster extended well beyond death and injury. Port-au-Prince and surrounding towns were left in ruins. Virtually every government building was damaged, and many civil servants—including police officers—were killed. Wary of the potential for escalating crime and violence in the capital, multilateral agencies, regional organizations, and bilateral donors rapidly focused on promoting increased policing capacities and wider security sector reforms.

The international focus on improving security sector capacity in Haiti is not new. Since declaring independence 200 years ago, the country has contended with periodic outbursts of political violence and international efforts to influence Haitian governance through the establishment of structural adjustment programmes and reform of the justice, military, policing, and corrections systems. In spite of billions of dollars poured into enhancing conventional security promotion, these approaches are routinely criticized for generating marginal returns in terms of improved safety on the ground in Haiti.[4]

Criticism aside, outsiders have a limited understanding of the dynamics of security and insecurity experienced by Haitian communities and households. While foreign and nationally based human rights agencies and researchers have alternately blamed international and domestic actors for repression or inaction, there is virtually no evidence-based research into how Haitians actually experience day-to-day security—or what kinds of violence prevention and reduction efforts are effective.[5]

In order to bridge this information gap, this chapter considers the context of security promotion efforts in the years preceding Haiti's 2010 earthquake and emerging trends in its aftermath. It draws on the findings of three household surveys administered before and after the earthquake in order to highlight crime victimization, access to basic needs, and attitudes about gun use and policing. A central objective of the chapter is to give voice to the real threats facing Haitians, in their own words.

Key findings indicate that:

- Haiti lacks both human resources and infrastructural capacity to police its country. Its ratio of 1.05 police officers for every 1,000 inhabitants is among the lowest in the world.
- Household survey data generated since 2004 suggests that security has improved in Haiti over the past decade and has continued to improve since the earthquake. Police involvement in criminal activity, as reported by crime victims, decreased sharply after the transition to an elected government in 2007.

- Findings from surveys show that, in 2010, more than two-thirds of the general population would turn first to the police if faced with a threat to their person or property.

- The distribution of firearms may be much lower than commonly believed. In 2010, just 2.3 per cent of Port-au-Prince area households reported owning firearms. Among the wealthy, 'personal protection' was most often cited as the reason for gun ownership, while the poor most often declared they held weapons 'for work'.

- In 2010, more than three-quarters of all respondents—both in the general population and residents of internally displaced person (IDP) camps—said that more control over the issuing of firearms licences would make their communities safer.

- Despite considerable challenges in advancing police reform over the past decade, popular confidence in the Haitian National Police (HNP) has increased since the earthquake.

Divided into three sections, this chapter begins by reviewing the state of the security sector before the 2010 earthquake. The focus is primarily on the Haitian National Police since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide demobilized the armed forces—long associated with repressive practices—in 1994. The chapter discusses the current state of

Map 8.1 **Haiti**

security as well as challenges facing the criminal justice system and HNP in the post-earthquake period. Lastly, it draws on findings from household surveys completed before and after the earthquake, to examine both the prevalence of crime victimization among Haitians since 2004 as well as recent changes in public opinion regarding gun ownership and security provision.

HAITI AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Haiti has been characterized by outsiders as a fragile, failing, or failed state since at least the 1980s.[6] The country has experienced considerable political volatility over the past two centuries, with more than 30 coups since independence in 1804 and no fewer than nine UN missions since 1990. While geopolitical interference in Haiti has played a significant role, particularly since the 1990s, certain analysts point to the country's extreme concentration of authority and wealth in the hands of the elite—elected and otherwise—as a source of persistent instability (Muggah, 2008; Maguire, 2009a; 2009b).

Haiti has been seen as a fragile, failing, or failed state since at least the 1980s.

For some of Haiti's diaspora and certain foreign governments, the heavy-handed dictatorships and associated paramilitary rule from the 1950s to the 1980s afforded a degree of stability. Yet, from the perspective of the vast majority of Haitians, especially those eking out an existence in the country's popular zones or shantytowns in and around Port-au-Prince and other major cities, the Duvaliers—father and son—terrorized the population into submission. They did this both through the arming of the so-called Tonton Macoute militia and by empowering Haiti's police force, then part of the Haitian armed forces, to use indiscriminate killings, torture, and arbitrary detention to enforce their power.[7]

In the latter half of the 1980s, the country experienced a rocky transition to democracy during which President Jean-Bertrand Aristide became the country's first democratically elected leader in 1991. In addition to promoting political participation by the impoverished majority of the population—a first in the country's history, which won him supporters and critics both in Haiti and abroad—Aristide demobilized the Haitian armed forces by presidential decree in 1994 and created the country's first civilian national police force, the HNP (Dupuy, 2005).

Haitians were initially hopeful that this new body, the HNP, would effectively control crime and increase safety, especially in the larger cities. During the 1990s, property crime and violence were widespread, in sharp contrast to Haiti's historically low crime rates. Business owners and the wealthy relied on privately hired armed guards—who were frequently implicated in vigilante-style violence—to provide basic security. Despite considerable investments in capacity development and training of the nascent force, the HNP was unable to address community-level criminal violence adequately during its early years (Hayes and Wheatley, 1996).

The political and economic situation in Haiti began to deteriorate dramatically during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Growing instability tested the HNP's ability to fight criminal violence and respond to organized armed violence committed by political groups. Trafficking in persons, weapons, and drugs, reportedly connected to Haiti's business elite, continued unabated, bringing financial support to the few while generating political unrest. As tensions mounted between the Haitian government and certain members of the international donor community, such as the United States and France, former members of the disbanded Haitian armed forces created the so-called 'rebel army', also known as the National Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Haiti (Front pour la Libération et la Reconstruction Nationales) (Muggah, 2005a). The army was composed of paramilitary thugs active during the 1991–94 military coup years and had recruited politically motivated armed gangs into their ranks.

With foreign backing and support from the national elite, as well as supporters in key positions within the HNP itself, the rebel army proved to be a surprisingly resilient opponent. Heavily armed with assault rifles and a firm supply network, the force began launching quiet but efficient attacks against border towns and urban centres between 2000 and 2004, with the goal of overthrowing the elected Haitian government. HNP officers struggled to respond. International and US-led restrictions against arms sales to the government since the early 1990s had never been fully lifted,[8] effectively prohibiting the HNP from legally purchasing weapons (Muggah, 2005a; 2005b). The HNP officers who remained committed to upholding the rule of law had few arms and little chance of surviving direct armed conflict with the rebel army.

By 2004, following successful rebel army attacks in the towns of St. Marc and Gonaïves, the HNP was overcome and scattered. The insurgent army rapidly advanced on the capital. With Aristide removed from power by foreign diplomats and with US marines occupying the National Palace, the insurgents were free to take the capital. Indeed, one of the insurgents' first actions after entering Port-au-Prince was to march two blocks past the National Palace to the National Penitentiary, where they freed hundreds of convicts.[9]

Despite the circumstances surrounding the interim government's establishment, the international community stepped in to support it with a stated goal of reshaping the fragile security sector.[10] Much like the US-led de-Bathization process in Iraq, the HNP was purged of 60 per cent of its officers, many of whom fled to other areas of the country

An anti-Aristide rebel beats on the corpse of a police officer with a machete in Gonaïves, some 100 km north of Port-au-Prince, February 2004. © Rodrigo Abd/AP Photo

or to the Dominican Republic, fearing that remnants of the rebel army might exact revenge. Some 540 members of the rebel army, many of whom had been soldiers in Haiti's long demobilized armed forces, were integrated into the 'new' HNP. Few of them, if any, were required to undergo the formal training and graduation from the police academy required of new recruits (Hallward, 2008, p. 128; ICG, 2005; Mendelson-Forman, 2006).[11]

At the request of the new interim government, the United Nations Security Council established the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in June 2004.[12] Led by Brazil, Canada, the European Union, and the United States and involving more than 40 countries, the large-scale deployment of international peacekeepers and police support marked an important turning point. With nearly 9,000 blue helmets and 3,000 international police deployed, the mission focused on ensuring stability by enhancing HNP capacities, extending the rule of law through improved delivery of justice services, and rebuilding the country's dilapidated judicial system (Muggah, 2010b, pp. 451–52). Though initially formed to uphold a coup government widely viewed by Haitians as illegitimate and repressive, MINUSTAH was successful in establishing strong support among both Haitian policy-makers and segments of the general population. Thus, MINUSTAH was able to maintain its presence even after the transition to a democratically elected president was made in late 2006.

A STATE OF INJUSTICE

Many international organizations and institutions—from the UN to the Organization of American States and the International Organisation of La Francophonie—devoted considerable energy to the reform and strengthening of Haiti's security and judicial system (Baranyi and Fortin, forthcoming). Support has ranged from financial assistance to the provision of technical expertise in policing, investigation, customs, and corrections reform. Donor-supported efforts to promote judicial reform since the mid-1990s have included the restructuring and revision of judicial procedures, legal codes, and protocols.

Many international organizations have been involved in reforming Haiti's security and judicial system.

Since 1998, efforts to codify and implement improved criminal and corrections laws have yielded few returns.[13] The most significant development in reforming the judicial sector during the past decade was arguably the passage of laws by Parliament in 2007 to create the Superior Judicial Council, mandated to devise rules for the training, recruiting, and disciplining of magistrates and the regulation of Haiti's magistrates school. In 2007, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security published a 'roadmap' identifying a range of key priorities to enhance the quality and quantity of justice, and, in particular, service delivery (UNDP, 2009).

To enhance implementation and improve access to justice for the population, an approach to justice reform emerged, focusing on simultaneous reforms across the judicial, policing, and corrections sectors and linking these to enhanced accountability.[14] For example, a Citizen's Forum (Comité Coordonnateur du Forum Citoyen) was created both to enhance citizen engagement and to monitor government transparency. Nevertheless, the country continued to feature outdated and disregarded laws, weak human resources, and practically non-existent infrastructure to manage cases (Baranyi and Salahub, 2010).

Over the past two decades, a major obstacle to high-quality judicial, police, and corrections service delivery was their illegitimacy in the eyes of Haitian civilians. This was particularly true during the years when unelected governments were in power. For instance, during the military dictatorship (1991–94), police officers were frequently implicated in the illegal arrest and torture of ordinary citizens (O'Neill, 1995). This changed from October 1994 to February

2004, as the country was in a period of struggling democratic governance, and state leaders rejected the use of the police force to exert political control. However, the post-coup interim government of President Boniface Alexandre and Prime Minister Gérard Latortue (2004–06) flirted with using the police as a tool to suppress popular dissent and punish political opponents (Dupuy, 2005).

As a result of the HNP's inefficiency and susceptibility to corruption, but also, in many cases, officer involvement in a wide range of human rights violations during the 2004 coup and its two-year aftermath, both international donors and local populations lost faith in the police force's capacity and willingness to deliver services. To bridge this legitimacy gap, donors invested heavily in police reform, recruitment, and human rights training, as well as community policing from 2004 onwards (Baranyi and Fortin, forthcoming; CIGI, 2009).

The Haitian National Police: before 2010

Although the 1987 Haitian Constitution sets out the terms for a national police force—including provisions for its composition and purpose[15]—the official HNP force was not established until the mid-1990s. Formally launched by President Aristide in 1995, the HNP was intended to serve as the exclusive armed entity responsible for maintaining law and order and protecting the life and property of citizens. Following the dissolution of the armed forces (the Forces Armées d'Haïti) the previous year, the HNP enjoyed wide jurisdiction. Haitians initially greeted the formation of the HNP with considerable enthusiasm. Despite investment from the United States and Canada and two UN missions (MIPONUH I and II), however, popular support for the police began to erode between 1996 and 2003 (Muggah, 2005a).

Administratively, the HNP is overseen by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. Similarly, the Prisons Administration Directorate and the emergency fire brigade (*sapeurs pompiers*) fall under the jurisdiction of the HNP. According to an internal review led by the Haitian authorities, the HNP has faced a host of inadequacies and problems since 1995, including limited staff, weak training, unpredictable funding, limited senior personnel, systemic corruption, poor inspection capacities, and a history of violating human rights.[16] To the average Haitian, the police were seen as having limited effectiveness at best.

Haiti has 1.05 officers for every 1,000 inhabitants— among the lowest ratios in the world.

The size and distribution of the HNP has oscillated since its creation, and it has never met international standards with respect to strength or capacity. As of late December 2009, public authorities claimed there were some 9,520 enlisted police officers (including some 746 female officers), most of them deployed in urban areas.[17] Added to this were 705 police and administrative staff of the Prisons Administration Directorate, for a grand total of 11,458 personnel.[18] This figure was lower than the projected strength of 14,000 officers set out in an HNP reform plan to be reached by late 2011 (GoH, 2006; US, 2009). With a population of at least 9.7 million, this accounts for a ratio of 1.05 officers for every 1,000 inhabitants—among the lowest ratios in the world.[19]

With assistance from the UN and bilateral donors, the institutional infrastructure of the HNP experienced considerable reforms beginning in the mid-1990s. As of 2009, there were more than 236 HNP facilities throughout the country.[20] Yet an estimated 39 of these—including seven precincts and 32 sub-precincts—were still considered non-operational prior to the January 2010 earthquake. Moreover, the overall size and configuration of the country's motor fleet was limited—with an estimated 600 vehicles of varying make and quality—resulting in major maintenance challenges.[21]

As noted above, the HNP is also mandated to oversee corrections facilities. Indeed, the Penitentiary Administration, the first civilian prison system in the country's history, was established in 1995 by former President Aristide. It was reconstituted as the Prisons Administration Directorate under the auspices of the HNP in 1997, and rudimentary investments were made until the country's descent into extreme violence in 2004. Prior to 2004, there were some 21 prisons with an estimated 6,440 m^2 of cell space for 3,640 detainees, or 1.76 m^2 per detainee. By 2009, however, the remaining 17 functioning prisons (overseen by 705 officers) reported a capacity of 4,894 m^2 for some 8,686 detainees, or 0.4 m^2 per detainee—well below international standards.[22] Haitian corrections authorities contended in 2009 that the number of detainees could surpass 16,000 by 2012.[23] Just as disconcerting, according to Haitian prison authorities, more than three-quarters (76 per cent) of detainees were 'pre-trial', with an average pre-trial detention period of approximately 20 months (see Box 8.1).[24]

Some international organizations credit MINUSTAH with having improved security across Haiti, particularly between 2007 and 2009 (Muggah, 2010b). However, human rights groups and researchers also heavily criticized MINUSTAH's early tactics, particularly its repressive handling of gangs (Hallward, 2008, pp. 272–76, 398–404). Specifically, between 2004 and 2006, heavy-handed interventions pursued by the HNP with tacit support from

MINUSTAH were designed specifically to arrest and neutralize armed elements. In some cases, these activities—described bluntly as 'disarm or die' campaigns—resulted in the accidental shooting deaths of dozens of citizens, including children.[25]

Against a backdrop of MINUSTAH-led stabilization efforts, UN civilian agencies were busy crafting a reform plan for the HNP with local counterparts in 2006.[26] In view of the frequency of natural disasters and the legacy of political unrest in Haiti, donors placed an emphasis on improving HNP capacity to counter floods, fires, and hurricanes throughout the country.[27] By 2009, there was growing confidence among international actors in the potential of the HNP to provide security, with the UN Security Council acknowledging key gaps but also citing real improvements.[28]

The Haitian National Police: after the earthquake

The impact of the earthquake on the human and physical infrastructure of the justice and security sector—and particularly the HNP—was extensive. Almost 80 HNP personnel were killed and another 253 injured directly by the earthquake. By UN estimates, almost one-quarter of Haiti's police capacity was rendered non-operational.[29] MINUSTAH records show that 55 buildings used by the HNP were affected, including some 28 facilities suffering 'major damages', such as collapse, and another 27 experiencing 'minor damages'.[30] If these structures are added to the 39 facilities that were already non-operational at the time of the earthquake, almost 40 per cent of HNP capacities could not be used at this stage.[31]

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the focus of the UN and international donor community was on rapidly ensuring the delivery of life-saving supplies, personnel, and equipment and restoring police communication, coordination, and response capabilities, particularly in anticipation of increased gang violence. International observers were concerned that damage and displacement generated by the earthquake—coupled with the impact of the global fiscal crisis on food prices—could generate a humanitarian disaster and an upswing of crimes against property and violence.[32]

In the first six months after the natural disaster, fears that escapees from prisons would perpetrate targeted attacks, extortion, and kidnappings were commonplace among NGOs and international organizations working in Haiti (Muggah, 2010b). International aid providers were worried that, if such violence were to occur, it would

Box 8.1   Port-au-Prince residents arrested by the HNP (2004–10)

As shown in Table 8.1, men between 18 and 27 years of age made up the greatest proportion of Port-au-Prince residents arrested by the HNP in 2004–10. The police arrested numerous individuals for 'delinquency', mostly for consorting with known or suspected criminals (though they personally may not have been accused of a specific criminal act other than associating with criminals). The number arrested for delinquency or 'unknown' reasons has declined since 2004 (see Table 8.2). Despite the constitutional mandate that individuals be charged and presented before a judge within 72 hours of their arrest, very few of the respondents ever saw a judge or were convicted of a crime; rather, most were held in prison without trial. The average length of prison detention ranged from 280 to 402 days.

Tables 8.1 and 8.2 present data obtained from surveys administered in 2009 and 2010. The first survey drew from a sample of 1,800 randomly selected Port-au-Prince area households in 2009 as part of the National Assessment of Health and Harm in Haiti. Respondents provided information about their own experiences with arrest as well as the experiences of all household members. This information was updated for each household member in 2010, six weeks after the earthquake, as part of a Post-Earthquake Assessment–General Population Survey (see Box 8.2). Of the original 1,800 households interviewed in 2009, 9.7 per cent were lost to follow-up in 2010 and thus excluded in subsequent calculations.

Members of a Haitian police special unit arrest a suspect during a sweep through Cité Soleil, the largest slum in Port-au-Prince, February 1997. © Thony Belizaire/AFP Photo

Table 8.1 Characteristics of Port-au-Prince residents arrested by the HNP, 2004–10

Category	Characteristics	Percentage
Sex	Male	86.9
	Female	13.1
Age	Under 18	19.0
	18-27 years old	42.9
	28-37 years old	16.7
	38 or older	21.4
Religion	Catholic or Protestant	48.9
	Voodoo	16.7
	Christian but also practises Voodoo	29.8
	Rastafarian	3.6
	Other or no religion	1.2
Employment at time of arrest	Self-employed–sales or service	35.7
	Self-employed–trade or professional	11.9
	Employed part-time or sporadically	7.9
	Employed full-time	2.4
	Unemployed adult	33.8
	Unemployed child under 18	8.3

Table 8.2 Characteristics of Port-au-Prince residents arrested by the HNP, 2004–10

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Place of detention (%)	Police station	38.4	41.5	40.6	32.7	24.1	22.8	60.0
	Prison	38.2	45.8	53.9	67.3	75.9	77.2	10.0
	Other	23.4	12.7	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
Reason for arrest (%)	Violent crime	12.1	9.0	4.8	13.7	18.3	20.2	*
	Non-violent crime	21.4	21.5	32.2	50.5	61.2	66.7	*
	Delinquency	22.1	17.4	16.2	13.8	9.7	10.5	*
	Unknown	44.4	52.1	46.8	22.0	10.8	2.6	*
Percentage who saw a judge		1.2	3.4	6.4	8.1	7.0	6.8	*
Percentage convicted of a crime		9.2	8.9	5.8	6.0	4.1	2.1	*
Average length of detention (in days)	Held in police station	23.2	14.8	11.7	4.3	3.1	2.6	1.1
	Held in prison	402.1	423.8	355.0	301.2	280.6	284.2	*
	Held in another place	11.0	9.2	**	**	**	**	2.5

Notes:

* Insufficient information was available for 2010, and these values could not be calculated.

** No individuals indicated being held in a place other than a police station or prison between 2006 and 2009.

Members of the local police force relax at their makeshift headquarters in Port-au-Prince in January 2010.
© Fred Dufour/AFP Photo

hamper relief efforts in Haiti and exacerbate instability if humanitarian assistance did not successfully reach affected populations. In certain cases, US officials turned away flights delivering supplies and medical personnel so that planes with US combat troops could land instead.[33]

Throughout this period, MINUSTAH military and police personnel supported domestic efforts alongside US and Canadian troops.[34] Fears of food riots, fleeing prisoners, and growing disorder were matched with massive investments in restoring public security. The so-called 'security umbrella' generated by this international presence is credited with enhancing humanitarian aid distribution, search and rescue operations, and the gradual return of national police to challenging areas. Meanwhile, a growing number of large, foreign private security companies began to explore opportunities in the country.[35]

VIOLENCE AND CRIME IN HAITI: BEFORE AND AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Despite considerable investment in justice and security before and after the 2010 earthquake, little is known about whether real and perceived safety have improved for most Haitians. Rather, media accounts continue to emphasize lawlessness, chaos, and brutality in the capital and surrounding regions. The problem of sexual violence is repeatedly cited as evidence that the security sector is in shambles, as is the alleged surge of criminal banditry in the shanty-towns of the country's major cities (MADRE et al., 2011).

Box 8.2 Household surveys in Haiti

Researchers affiliated with the Small Arms Survey conducted studies in Haiti to assess the experiences and opinions of Haitian citizens over the past five years. Similar sampling procedures and data collection instruments were used in each of the surveys. Households were randomly sampled from the population using Random GPS Coordinate Sampling, and adult household members were then randomly selected to participate in the study. This process allowed for a representative sample that can be generalized to the entire population, providing invaluable insight into the experiences, ideas, and opinions of ordinary Haitians.

The 2010 surveys, funded by the UN Development Programme and the Ottawa-based International Development Research Centre, were undertaken primarily to inform the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment process and support government authorities in determining priorities for security promotion (see Table 8.3). These surveys allow for a careful reading of mortality, injury, and victimization as well as attitudes towards public institutions and security providers, including the HNP and foreign actors.

Table 8.3 Port-au-Prince area household surveys

Year	Study	Population and focus
2005	Wayne State University Study of Health and Human Rights in Haiti	1,260 Port-au-Prince area households regarding experiences in the 22 months following the February 2004 coup against Aristide (Kolbe and Hutson, 2006; Wayne State University, 2005).
2009	University of Michigan Neighbourhood Survey	Nearly 1,000 households from three highly populated and impoverished neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince; focused on crime, gun use, and opinions about security provision (Small Arms Survey, 2009b).
	National Assessment of Health & Harm in Haiti	2,800 households from urban and peri-urban communities throughout Haiti, of which 1,800 were from the Port-au-Prince area; focus on physical and mental health, experiences with human rights violations from 2004 to 2009, substance use, gun use, quality of life, and opinions regarding security and national events (Kolbe et al., 2010; University of Michigan, 2009). Qualitative interviews were conducted with an additional 150 crime victims, their household members, and community leaders regarding the need for access to community services (University of Michigan, 2009).
2010	Post-Earthquake Assessment–General Population	Recontacted the 1,800 capital-area households interviewed in 2009 for an additional interview; focus on current location and status of all previously included household members, provision of basic human needs, food insecurity, sanitation, physical and mental health, mortality, opinions about service provision, gun use, access to information, and experiences with crime. An additional 150 qualitative interviews were conducted with crime victims, household members of victims, and leaders in the community (Kolbe and Muggah, 2010; Kolbe et al., 2010; Small Arms Survey, 2010).
	Post-Earthquake Assessment–IDPs	1,147 households residing in 30 IDP camps (25 of which were randomly chosen, five of which were identified as the largest camps in the capital area); focus on assessing basic human needs, health, access to information, gun use, opinions about security, and experiences with human rights violations (Kolbe and Muggah, 2010; Kolbe et al., 2010; Small Arms Survey, 2010).

In fact, comparatively little data or analysis is available on actual rates of criminal violence over time and across communities. National government capacity to conduct vital and criminal statistics remains startlingly weak. Despite some descriptive studies undertaken in recent years by Canadian and US research institutes and universities, Amnesty International, and Médecins Sans Frontières, the availability of valid and reliable evidence is limited.[36] To fill these data gaps, several surveys of Haitian households were conducted in 2005, 2009, and 2010 (see Box 8.2). The 2010 post-earthquake surveys found that, contrary to popular belief, crime rates were much lower than suggested by the global media.
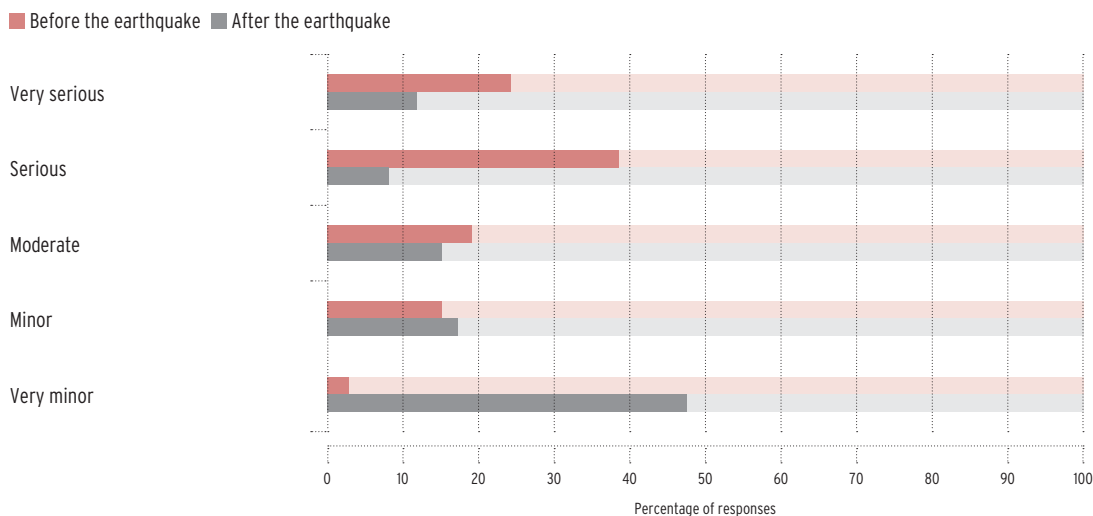
Other surprising findings emerged from the 2010 surveys. First, violent crime was considerably less pervasive in the six weeks after the earthquake than was indicated by the media. Despite major concerns among international donors about the risk of property-related crime, it was also surprisingly low. Another notable finding in 2010 was that the preferred security provider for addressing crime and victimization was, overwhelmingly, the HNP.

Violent crime

Crime and insecurity were widely considered problems long before the earthquake of January 2010. Indeed, almost two-thirds (62.9 per cent) of those surveyed in the general population in 2009 asserted that, before the earthquake, crime was a serious problem. After the earthquake, however, just one in five (20.0 per cent) of those surveyed in the general population said that crime or insecurity constituted a major problem (see Figure 8.1). While this drop could be due to a reprioritization of needs in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, it could also reflect reduced experiences of crime as rates of property crime, kidnapping, physical assault, and murder decreased in comparison to previous years.

In terms of violent crime, a clear pattern emerges that mirrors the country's democratic transitions: the incidence of violent and non-violent crime was low in the first two months of 2004 (when the country was ruled by an elected leader), rose significantly from March 2004 to late 2006 (when an unelected leader ruled following a coup), and decreased steadily between early 2007 (after democratic elections) and 2010 (Kolbe et al., 2010).

Figure 8.1 **How serious a problem is crime/insecurity?**

Before the earthquake   After the earthquake

Sources: Small Arms Survey (2010); University of Michigan (2009)

Sexual violence

Notwithstanding reductions in reported violent or politically motivated crimes, reports of sexual assault increased dramatically in the post-earthquake period. Considerable media attention was devoted to the rising incidence of sexual violence in Port-au-Prince and around displaced person camps in the months following the earthquake.[37] While Amnesty International pointed to the likelihood of gender-based victimization, its reports relied on qualitative assessments that could not be used to calculate rates of victimization.[38] The findings generated by this study do indeed support claims of a sharp increase in sexual assaults made in these reports; survey data shows that an estimated 10,813 individuals[39] in Port-au-Prince were sexually assaulted in the six weeks after the earthquake, with almost 70 per cent of the attackers identified by the respondents as (anonymous) 'criminals' (Kolbe et al., 2010).[40] The number of victims is significantly higher than in the previous three years, when an estimated 30,000–50,000 individuals were sexually assaulted per year.

Property crime

While NGO reports regarding sexual violence were supported by the surveys, media claims of widespread looting and organized theft were not. The vast majority of Port-au-Prince residents reported that neither they nor any members

The corpse of a 55-year-old man lies on the ground of his shack as residents look on in the slum of Cité Soleil in Port-au-Prince, February 2005. Witnesses said he was accidentally killed by police. © Ariana Cubillos/AP Photo

Table 8.4 **Percentage of Port-au-Prince households reporting property crime**								
	General property theft	**Food only**	**Food and property**	**Money and property**	**Water only**	**Money only**	**Vandalism**	**Broke in but did not steal anything**
2004	1.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.1	1.3	0.2	0.1
2005	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0	0.6	1.2	0.2
2006	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.4	2.2	0.1
2007	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0
2008	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.0
2009	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	1.3	0.0
2010	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.0	1.4	0.1	0.2	0.3

Sources: Small Arms Survey (2010); University of Michigan (2009)

of their household had property stolen from them or intentionally destroyed by others after the earthquake. Only an estimated 4.1 per cent of all Port-au-Prince households experienced some form of theft, vandalism, or intentional destruction of property in the first six weeks after the earthquake. Indeed, the most common thefts reported related to water or food, unsurprising given the high levels of food insecurity.

These incidents tended to be geographically concentrated in certain neighbourhoods and usually involved relatively modest values. Notably, in comparison to neighbourhoods ranked as dangerous by survey respondents, Cité Soleil and Bel Air were identified as 'average'. A comparative analysis reveals that property crime decreased as a whole; while 4.2 per cent of surveyed households reported property crime during January and February 2005, only 1.3 per cent of households did so in the same months of 2009 (see Table 8.4).

Attitudes towards security providers

The household surveys highlight that the general population and IDP camp residents viewed the HNP as the preferred security provider in 2010. What is perhaps most interesting is to what extent appreciation of police had improved since the previous year. When asked, 'Who would you turn to first if you were robbed or someone threatened to hurt or kill you?', more than two-thirds (66.7 per cent) of all respondents in 2010 (both general and displaced) identified the police. This figure stands in sharp contrast to that of 2009, when just 38 per cent of the population listed the HNP as a first recourse in the case of threats to person or property. Other responses included relatives or neighbours, heads of household, and community elders (see Table 8.5). Possible explanations for the increased confidence in the HNP include heightened confidence in public institutions, a decrease in the UN's credibility, and disruptions to alternative routes for personal security (such as relying on family or hiring private security guards) in the wake of the earthquake.

There also appears to be widespread agreement among Haitians that the HNP should be the primary security entity in the country. When asked in 2010, 'Ideally, who should be responsible for security?', almost two-thirds (63.6 per cent) of the general public named the police. Meanwhile, the 'community' was cited by more than one-quarter (27.2 per cent), and the remainder chose MINUSTAH, the family, local government, the Ministry of the Interior, or

Table 8.5 Who would you turn to first if you were robbed or someone threatened to hurt or kill you?				
Response	**2009**		**2010**	
	Robbed (%)	**Threatened (%)**	**Robbed (%)**	**Threatened (%)**
Relative, friend, or neighbour	12.0	18.1	38.5	13.5
Police	40.7	38.0	56.6	66.7
Former members of the Haitian army	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.0
Foreign military	9.7	28.9	0.3	0.0
Private security company or similar	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0
Community elders	3.7	2.5	2.3	8.4
Head of the family	0.6	2.5	0.8	9.2
An armed group	0.4	1.2	0.2	0.0
Nothing/no point in doing anything	29.9	6.6	0.6	0.1
Other/don't know	2.0	1.1	0.6	0.0

Sources: Small Arms Survey (2010); University of Michigan (2009)

private security firms. Not one respondent opted for the former members of the armed forces (see Table 8.6). This is an important finding, since there has been persistent debate in some quarters since 2004 around resurrecting the disbanded Haitian armed forces (Hallward, 2008).

Table 8.6 General population: Ideally, who should be responsible for security?				
Response	**2009**		**2010**	
	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Local government	136	7.8	17	1.0
Ministry of the Interior	85	4.9	7	0.4
MINUSTAH	374	21.6	61	3.5
Police	859	49.5	1,102	63.6
Former members of the armed forces	19	1.1	0.0	0.0
Private security firms	50	2.9	14	0.8
The community	109	6.3	471	27.2
Family	46	2.7	60	3.5
An armed group	31	1.8	0.0	0.0
Other	25	1.4	0.0	0.0
Total	**1,734**	**100.0**	**1,732**	**100.0**

Sources: Small Arms Survey (2010); University of Michigan (2009)

A private security guard stands outside a burning store in downtown Port-au-Prince, January 2010.
© Carlos Barria/Reuters

Similar themes emerged from an analysis of in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with randomly selected survey participants in 2009 and 2010. Respondents across all socio-economic backgrounds expressed increasing confidence that the police could and would respond to their requests for assistance (see Box 8.3). As one interviewee put it:

> The police have changed and now they are getting better at doing their job. In the past the police sat around doing nothing. If you approached them to complain about a crime you would be lucky to get any response. Now they are more active because they know the eyes of the foreign police are on them.[41]

Other respondents attributed improved policing to increased funding, better training, and technical assistance provided by MINUSTAH and foreign consultants; they also reported that the police were no longer engaged in politically motivated mistreatment of particular segments of society. Several respondents claimed that police officers treat residents with more respect because they are recruited from within the neighbourhoods that they are policing. As one elderly resident of Carrefour explained:

> It's not an 'us versus them' situation anymore. We've known some of [the officers] since they were children playing here in our streets. So when they come here to do police work we treat them with respect and they treat us with respect as well.[42]

Box 8.3   Perceptions of policing in 2010: 'getting better all the time'

Respondents routinely used terms such as 'changed', 'better', and 'more professional' to describe the HNP in 2010 as com-
pared to five years ago. Political changes, as well as professionalization and training of the HNP, could account for this shift;
five years ago, the police were regularly used by the national government to curb free speech and maintain unelected
power in the face of widespread popular discontent. Today's elected government largely avoids using the police force in
such a way, and some police officials who were involved in those practices in the past have left the force.

While respondents described some shortcomings, they expressed overall confidence that the police would respond when
needed, that they were more active in policing specific neighbourhoods, that they were not systematically used by the
current government to target political dissentients, and that they were less corrupt than in the past. According to those
surveyed, police presence was robust following the earthquake, with about half of all respondents having seen police within
the last 48 hours (see Figure 8.2). Police appeared to be readily available in most neighbourhoods; they continued with
regular policing duties, sometimes despite the destruction of their neighbourhood police station.

In the course of the 2010 survey and qualitative interviews, respondents shared personal stories that highlighted their
attitudes towards and experiences with the police:

During that time [2006] if you told the police you had been raped, they might take that as an invitation to have you
[sexually] as well. They wouldn't protect you or arrest the rapist. But when my daughter was violated [in 2009] I was
confident in the police. They had a policewoman interview my child and they arrested [the rapist]. The police said:
'Don't worry, we will help you. You don't need to shed any more tears.' And they were right.

                                                                                          —37-year-old woman, market vendor

Two police officers are always stationed at the end of our street. My wife went to them when our home was robbed.
They called the boss and made a report. The boss agreed that robbery was occurring too frequently in our area so
he sent some other police to track down the robbers. They spoke to everyone and found witnesses so they could
arrest the criminals. In the past only the wealthy received this kind of service from the police; now even an ordinary
man can expect to have his report treated with importance.

                                                                                          —45-year-old man, taxi driver

Figure 8.2   **When was the last time you saw the police?**

Percentage of responses
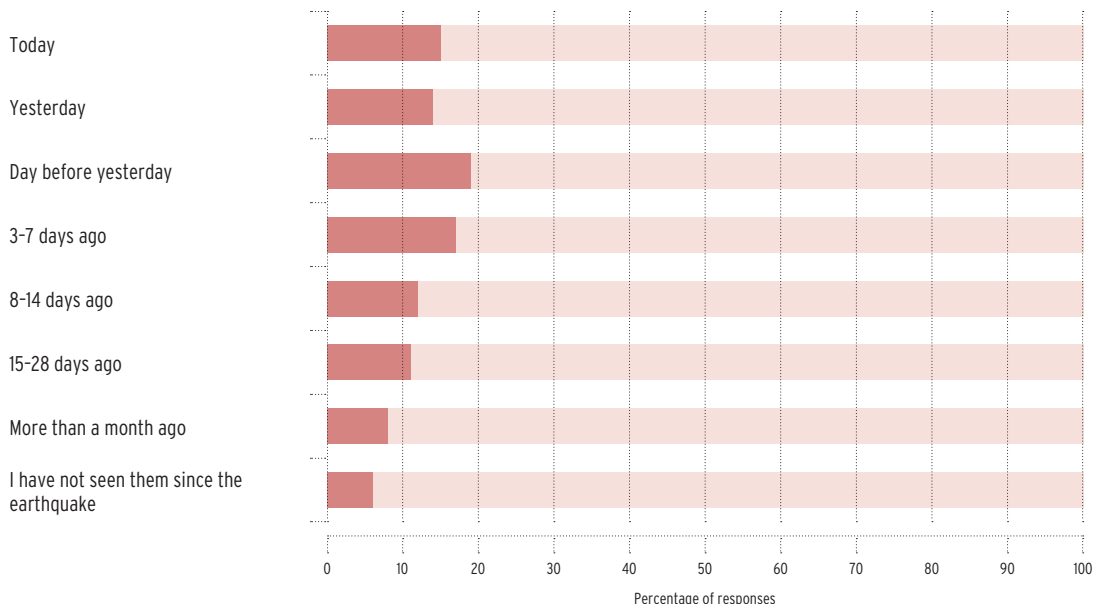
Residents also highlighted the increased responsiveness on the part of the police when responding to situations such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, crimes against children, and conflicts involving the mentally ill. Most respondents said that, in the past, HNP officers had refused to intervene in some situations, such as domestic violence, claiming it was not illegal for a man to hit his wife. They described how, in recent years, particularly since 2008, the police had become more responsive in addressing violence against women.

The 2010 survey revealed a host of anecdotes regarding enhanced police sensitivity. For example, one man recounted seeking police assistance for a spousal abuse incident involving his neighbour:

We were reluctant to get involved, but finally my wife told me to go to the police. The police came and arrested [my neighbour]. A female officer talked to his wife and warned her that a judge might release her husband soon. So she decided to leave and return to her parents' home in the provinces. The police helped her pack her things and drove her to the taptap [private transport] station.[43]

HNP involvement in human rights violations

Each of the household surveys examined the role of the HNP in committing human rights violations. A frequent complaint voiced by respondents concerned the HNP's use of excessive force and arbitrary arrest during various periods since 2004. Respondents described how officers had indiscriminately arrested passers-by during demonstrations, beat and shot market women and children during anti-gang manoeuvres, and engaged in unethical conduct, such as theft, vandalism, or demanding bribes while on duty. Reports from the International Crisis Group recount similar incidents involving the HNP (ICG, 2005; 2008).

Empirical evidence reveals a pattern of HNP involvement in criminal activity, particularly when examining property crimes reported by survey respondents between January and February of each year from 2004 to 2010. During those months in 2004, HNP officers were not held responsible for any of the property crimes; however, during the same months of 2005 and 2006, HNP officers were named as responsible for 17.7 and 10.8 per cent of property crimes, respectively. Similarly, HNP and other government security forces were identified as responsible for 5.7 per cent of an estimated 32,000 property crimes committed in the Port-au-Prince area in the 22 months after the departure of President Aristide on 28 February 2004 (Kolbe and Hutson, 2006). This pattern of HNP involvement in criminal activity tracks the overthrow and return of democracy exactly.

Yet the past three years have witnessed a reversal of this trend. Indeed, for both property crimes and crimes against persons, police were seldom found responsible for perpetrating criminal acts from early 2007 (see Table 8.7). In the six weeks after the earthquake, HNP and foreign soldiers were blamed for some property crimes. Yet, on closer inspection, respondents affirmed that while their home had been broken into, nothing had actually been stolen. Acts that residents called vandalism were probably conducted in the course of post-earthquake search and rescue operations rather than for criminal purposes.

Instead of regarding the police as perpetrators of violence who are to be feared, respondents interviewed for the 2010 surveys were more likely to describe the HNP as 'protectors'. Data from both surveys reflects this perception, with police significantly less likely to be named as the perpetrator of a crime in 2008–10 as compared to 2004–07. Indeed, qualitative interview respondents who had previously relied on private security firms or had felt compelled to arm themselves to ward off crime expressed a new trust that the HNP could and would provide security and that the aforementioned coping strategies were less necessary than in the past. Nevertheless, a significant debate continues

In 2010, Haitians expressed a new trust that the HNP would provide security.

Table 8.7 **Perpetrators of property crimes in January and February, 2004–10**							
Perpetrators	**Percentage of responses**						
	2004	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
Criminals	67.8	39.0	21.4	36.5	44.9	68.2	17.1
HNP	0.0	14.4	13.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Foreign soldier	0.0	11.2	13.9	5.8	1.0	0.0	4.4
Gang member	1.1	6.2	9.5	6.0	8.7	0.0	1.5
Armed political group	0.0	12.7	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Neighbour	7.1	1.4	1.8	7.8	15.7	8.7	29.4
Crowd of desperate people	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9
Current or ex-friend/partner	4.8	1.0	6.0	8.4	18.3	21.7	11.8
Unknown	19.2	12.7	27.4	35.5	11.4	1.4	27.9

Sources: Small Arms Survey (2010); University of Michigan (2009)

in Haiti, as elsewhere, over the merits of publicly versus privately administered security (Jones, 2010). When asked in 2010 who should be responsible for security, however, the overwhelming majority of IDP camp respondents (more than two-thirds) indicated local government. The army (long disbanded) was a distant second at 8.7 per cent.

Arming for self-defence

As citizens develop more confidence in their police force, they are arguably less likely to obtain and use weapons to protect themselves. When asked in 2010 whether they held a weapon, only 2.3 per cent of Port-au-Prince area households reported owning firearms. Respondents may be reluctant to discuss sensitive topics such as gun ownership, or they may appear cooperative although they are dishonest when responding. To increase accuracy, interviewers repeatedly reminded respondents that the survey was confidential, and that they could decline to answer any question they wished.

Despite this, few respondents declined to answer, and most were not only willing to answer, but also to show their weapons and gun permits as evidence. Haitian society does not have cultural taboos regarding gun ownership that would prevent respondents from disclosing their ownership of firearms. Since respondents were forthright in other segments of the interviews when providing sensitive information (for instance, when discussing substance abuse, experiences of sexual abuse, and, in a few cases, their own illegal 'employment'), the low ownership rate of 2.3 per cent may be treated as reasonably reliable. It is slightly higher than the percentage of Port-au-Prince residents with permits to own a firearm (which was 1.9 per cent in 2009), but is lower than the figures provided by MINUSTAH and other international actors, which range from 8 to 22 per cent of all Port-au-Prince area households (Small Arms Survey, 2010; University of Michigan, 2009).

Among those who reported owning a weapon, there were an average 2.7 firearms per home. Handguns, such as revolvers, were the most commonly reported, followed by rifles and pistols. Shotguns and 'other arms' (including grenade launchers and machine guns) were the least commonly reported. Those who reported possessing a firearm

Table 8.8 **Why do you own a firearm?**		
Response	**Popular zones (%)**	**Other areas (%)**
Personal protection	14.2	46.6
Property protection	16.6	12.6
Political security	19.4	25.7
Work	30.7	15.2
Left over from the army	9.0	0.0
Tradition	4.9	0.0
Valued family possession	5.2	0.0

Source: Small Arms Survey (2010)

were asked why they first obtained the weapon and when, as well as the reason for its last use; it was thus possible to disaggregate the reasons why gun owners chose to arm themselves.

Responses provided by residents of popular zones (densely populated low-income areas with higher crime rates) differ markedly from those of residents of neighbourhoods with greater economic diversity and lower population density (see Table 8.8). The survey reveals that, in the popular zones, the most common reason given for weapons possession was 'work' (30.7 per cent); in each of these households, at least one adult was employed as a security guard or police officer, and the reported weapon was either a pistol or a shotgun (the two firearms most commonly used in these professions). In other areas, however, the most common reason offered was 'personal protection' (46.6 per cent). 'Political security' was the second most common reason for gun possession for both geographic groups.

Further nuances emerge between households in different income brackets. Specifically, it appears that wealthier households were more likely to own weapons than middle- or lower-income households, whether in 2009 or 2010. Wealthier households also owned a greater number of weapons than low- and middle-income households and were less likely to state that their reason for weapons ownership was work-related. There is no discernable socio-cultural explanation for why wealthy households would be more willing to disclose gun ownership than middle- or lower-income households in this context, so it may be assumed that the findings are accurate.

In Haiti, as elsewhere, political groups and factions are generally assumed to be more likely to hold weapons than those claiming to be unaffiliated. Each of the surveys in 2009 and 2010 examined political party affiliation and gun ownership, finding that political party membership had no statistically significant impact on whether a household owned a firearm. Rather, qualitative interviews indicated wide-ranging reasons for gun acquisition and ownership. Respondents from wealthier households, for example, often cited 'protection of persons and property' as the primary reason they had chosen to obtain a gun.

Among the wealthy, firearm ownership was frequently accompanied by the use of private security companies to protect one's home and business (though weapons owned or used only by private security personnel were not included in the household's roster of weapons or in calculating gun ownership by the respondent). One resident described his choice to amass a small arsenal as 'taking fate into one's own hands'. He added: 'If I never have to use it, so be it. But for me, it is peace of mind. If criminals break in, I'll shoot them. Then I'll call the police.'

Figure 8.3 **Post-earthquake: Does owning a firearm make your family more or less safe?**
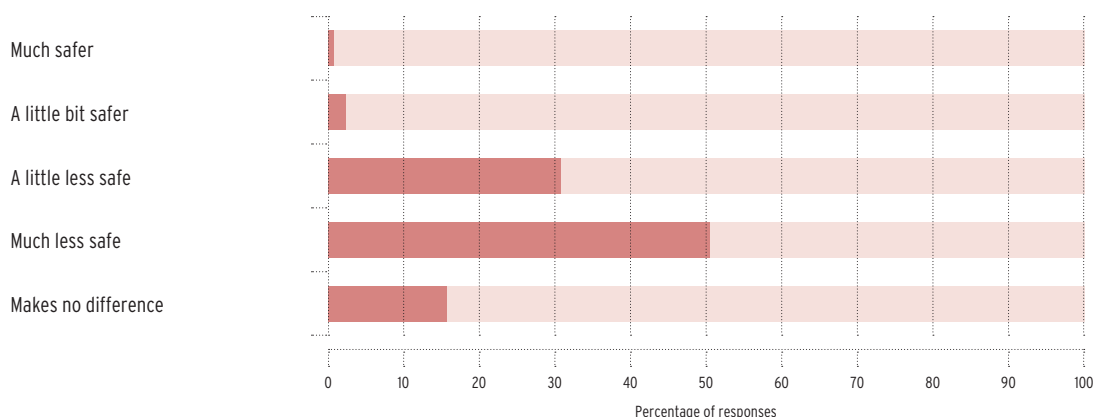
Source: Small Arms Survey (2010)

Nevertheless, owning firearms as a means to 'increase personal security' was seldom identified as a coping strategy among survey respondents (see Figure 8.3). Indeed, more than half of the respondents from the general population surveyed after the earthquake said that owning a weapon made one less safe. Only 15.7 per cent said that it makes no difference, and 3.0 per cent said that owning a weapon makes one either much safer (0.7 per cent) or a little bit safer (2.3 per cent).

OPTIONS FOR SECURITY PROMOTION IN HAITI

Despite considerable improvement in local perceptions of police capacity and effectiveness, Haitians have identified areas of security promotion that need further attention. One goal relates to enhancing the capacity and responsiveness of HNP to all Haitians, given the pervasive concern that security provision remains intolerably unequal. In particular, individuals still need to 'know someone' in order to ensure a rapid reaction to complaints. Respondents also acknowledged that certain officers are 'lazy' when responding to requests for assistance.[44] In addition, they pointed to the need for better regulation of firearms and the reining in of armed groups.

Reinforcing the HNP

In 2010, the Haitian government and the international community focused on facilitating practical improvements to security on the ground. A key question related to balancing efforts to reconstitute the 'formal' legal and procedural systems in the capital on the one hand, with investments in more 'informal' and locally targeted community policing, the deployment of private security, informal mediation, and grassroots violence prevention in specific neighbourhoods on the other. Should interventions be shaped by fundamental changes in law and justice, investment in magistrates and judges, support for police and corrections systems, or community-driven mediation and peace-making efforts? During qualitative interviews conducted as part of the post-earthquake assessment, respondents proposed local options for security promotion, a few of which are reproduced in Box 8.4.

Box 8.4 Perceptions matter: practical suggestions to improve policing in Haiti

Haitians appear to be resolute that support for the HNP is an investment worth making. Indeed, a large majority of respondents from the general population surveyed in 2010 believe that strengthening the capacity of police would make their community safer (94.4 per cent). This suggests a growing faith in the ability of the police to protect local interests. Numerous interviewees suggested ways of improving policing:

> The police should go after the criminals by pretending to be weak so the criminals attack them and then the police could arrest them. The police shouldn't just wait for the crime to happen, they should be looking for the criminals under every rock until they find them and put them in jail.
>
> ~19-year-old man, student

> The police need better equipment, like trucks, and they should patrol both by walking around and also from the trucks. Instead of having ten police in the back of the truck, they should get out and walk around. They should go in the corridors and get to know the women of the neighbourhood so that people will come to them and say, 'Hey, there was a crime here and I saw who did it.'
>
> ~48-year-old woman, nurse

> You should be able to call or text message the police and tell them if you see a crime or need help. And then they should come right away, not later when it is more convenient.
>
> ~26-year-old man, plumber

Two weeks after the 2010 earthquake, a Haitian police officer holds his rifle as he stands guard in the business district of Port-au-Prince. © Joe Raedle/Getty Images

A major concern registered by respondents to surveys in 2009 and 2010 related to the issues of arrest and incarceration. Specifically, respondents observed that criminals were often released without being charged or even seeing a judge. While this issue reflects deficiencies in the wider justice sector as a whole, many respondents blame the HNP in particular. In fact, this dynamic puts pressure on the police to take justice into their own hands, for example by reverting to past practices of punishing or even executing suspects because they know the courts cannot hold criminals accountable. This illustrates one of the many ways in which security sector improvements are partly reliant on justice sector reforms and vice versa.

Interviewees complained that police were sometimes reluctant to deal with juvenile delinquents, drunks, and violent mentally ill people, claiming that there was 'no place to put them'. As noted above, Haiti currently has few facilities in which to house detainees. Moreover, despite a complete lack of legal aid in most neighbourhoods, it is widely recognized that police station cells are, in fact, holding centres for individuals who may present a danger to themselves or others although they are not necessarily criminals.

Steps are under way to improve the capacity of the HNP, which has a strength of about 11,500. For one, the HNP reform plan for 2006–11 projects a police force of 14,000 officers. The reform places major emphasis on modernizing and upgrading existing police structures and ensuring that procedures are in compliance with international standards. Accountability and respect for human rights

are also key features. Nevertheless, the recruitment and training process has repeatedly been delayed.[45] In 2009, the certification and vetting process of HNP personnel was ongoing. As of December 2009, some 7,154 applicant investigation files were opened by joint UN–HNP teams, with some 3,496 of these under active investigation. Between 2006 and 2009, a total of 3,503 files were handed over to the UN–HNP teams with recommendations on certification (UNDP, 2009).

Enhancing the regulation of firearms

The debate on enhancing firearm controls in Haiti extends back at least two decades. Indeed, the failure of the United States to disarm the military and paramilitary during the US military intervention in 2004, the UN decision not to implement a disarmament campaign during the 1995–98 mission, and the limited number of weapons collected from 'gang members' by repeated UN- and HNP-led anti-gun campaigns have all highlighted some of the challenges inherent in collecting and destroying weapons already in circulation (Muggah, 2005a). Nevertheless, respondents to the 2009 and 2010 surveys reveal that Haitians would welcome more firearm licensing control, more robust penalties for illegal firearm possession, and corresponding legislation to outlaw militias. Although many Haitians in both the general population and the IDP camps reported feeling safer in 2010 as compared to 2009, there are still widespread concerns about the particular influence of firearms in shaping community security and safety.

Table 8.9 Greater control of firearms licences would make my community safer			
	2010 IDP camp residents (%)	2009 general population (%)	2010 general population (%)
Strongly agree	44.5	39.3	38.7
Agree	44.1	44.1	40.2
Disagree	4.1	5.4	7.4
Strongly disagree	6.8	11.3	5.6
Don't know	0.6	0.0	8.1
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Sources: Small Arms Survey (2010); University of Michigan (2009)

Table 8.10 Harsher punishment for illegal weapons possession would make my community safer			
	2010 IDP camp residents (%)	2009 general population (%)	2010 general population (%)
Strongly agree	53.0	28.0	30.1
Agree	40.1	43.2	50.0
Disagree	5.0	11.1	7.7
Strongly disagree	1.8	17.7	5.9
Don't know	0.2	0.0	6.3
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Sources: Small Arms Survey (2010); University of Michigan (2009)

Table 8.11 Collecting illegal guns from their owners would make my community safer			
	2010 IDP camp residents (%)	**2009 general population (%)**	**2010 general population (%)**
Strongly agree	49.3	43.9	49.0
Agree	46.0	45.2	47.6
Disagree	2.8	2.3	2.2
Strongly disagree	1.6	1.4	1.2
Don't know	0.4	0.0	0.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Sources: Small Arms Survey (2010); University of Michigan (2009)

Specifically, respondents frequently expressed support for government-led measures to regulate access and to use of firearms. More than three-quarters of all respondents in 2010 (whether IDP camp residents or the general population) either agree or strongly agree that more control over the issuing of firearm licences would make their communities safer (see Table 8.9). Likewise, more than 80 per cent of all respondents in 2010 also agreed or strongly agreed that harsher punishments for illegal weapons possession would improve community safety (see Table 8.10). Finally, almost all asserted that arms collection programmes would make their community safer (see Table 8.11). In qualitative interviews conducted in 2009 and 2010, many expressed frustration that wealthier segments of society are not held to the same standards as the rest of the population where firearms are concerned.

Addressing armed gangs and groups

As noted above, the issue of firearms and weapons misuse is widely considered a major security issue in Haiti. Indeed, roughly half of all respondents said there were too many guns in society today. But these weapons are unevenly distributed throughout society, and it matters fundamentally which groups are perceived to be armed. When the general population was asked in 2010 which segments of society had too many guns, they most often named 'criminal groups' (74.1 per cent), 'business people' (65.1 per cent), and 'ex-soldiers' (45.7 per cent). The least commonly named included 'politicians' (2 per cent), 'households' (1.8 per cent), and 'armed political groups' (4 per cent).[46]

Table 8.12 Outlawing armed groups would make my community safer (2009)	
	Percentage
Strongly agree	35.0
Agree	38.3
Disagree	6.5
Strongly disagree	20.2
Total	**100.0**

Source: University of Michigan (2009)

Table 8.13 **Peace accords between armed gangs would make my community safer (2009)**	
	Percentage
Strongly agree	25.4
Agree	21.6
Disagree	30.3
Strongly disagree	21.6
Refused to respond	1.1
Total	**100.0**

Source: University of Michigan (2009)

Although 'armed gangs' and 'political groups' were seldom identified as responsible for violence in recent years, crimes were often attributed to them in the past. In order to ascertain public assumptions about violence attribution and responsibility, and what steps could make communities safer, respondents were asked whether outlawing 'armed groups' would improve security. In 2009, 73.3 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed that it would (see Table 8.12); after the earthquake this figure has decreased slightly, with 69.6 per cent of the general population either agreeing or strongly agreeing.

One approach to reducing violence among 'armed groups' was pioneered by the Brazilian NGO Viva Rio in Port-au-Prince. Focusing on Bel Air, informal 'peace accords' were agreed between warring factions in order to reduce homicidal violence. Communities reporting a decline in homicide rates were rewarded with primary school scholarships and neighbourhood parties. When asked whether these peace accords between armed gangs were effective at increasing community safety, 47 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed in 2009 (though this percentage was significantly higher among survey respondents living in or around Bel Air; see Table 8.13). Since the earthquake, this figure increased slightly; in 2010, 55.4 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed.

Figure 8.4 **Since 2004, supporters of Aristide have committed a lot of violence in my community**

■ 2009 ■ 2010

Percentage of respondents
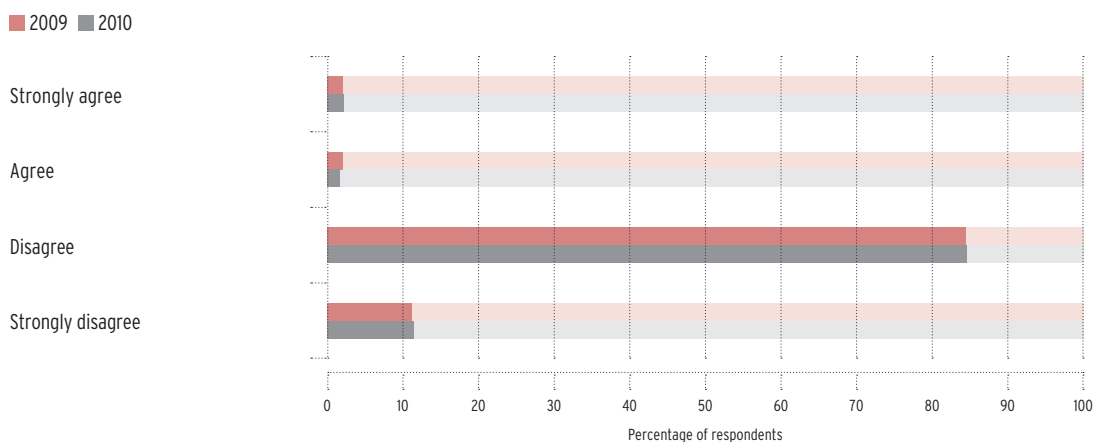
Sources: Small Arms Survey (2010); University of Michigan (2009)

Approaches to addressing so-called 'political groups' are more complex. For the purposes of this chapter, information about the particular role of political groups in perpetrating violence and crime was collected through public opinion questions, from the attributed 'perpetrator' for crimes committed against household members in the previous five years, and through additional qualitative questions to respondents. Overall, both quantitative and qualitative data collected in 2009 and 2010 indicates that political groups were engaged in violence and crime during 2004, 2005, and 2006, though this involvement appears to have steadily tapered off since early 2007 (Moestue and Muggah, 2010; Muggah, 2010b).

Political groups were not named for any of the crimes reported by respondents from 2008 (political groups could have committed crimes during these later years but in such small numbers that the survey design was unable to detect them). Indeed, oft-quoted statements about the Lavalas party being involved in violence were not supported by these surveys. In both 2009 and 2010, fewer than four per cent of the general population agreed with the statement, 'Since 2004, supporters of Aristide have committed a lot of violent acts in my community' (see Figure 8.4).

CONCLUSION

This chapter challenges the conventional wisdom on pre- and post-earthquake security in Haiti. It shows that Haiti remained stable in the months following the earthquake despite impaired policing capacity and deficiencies in key justice institutions. Far from what was expected, crime rates were also dramatically lower than predicted during the period just after the earthquake. In fact, only 4.1 per cent of all Port-au-Prince households experienced property violation such as theft, vandalism, or the intentional destruction of property in the six weeks after the earthquake; the property crime that did take place was concentrated in just a few neighbourhoods and caused only modest losses.

The chapter detects what appears to be an important shift in attitudes towards the Haitian security sector since the earthquake. While the HNP perpetrated acts of violence against the population during the 2004–06 crisis, the transition to a democratically elected government in 2007 was accompanied by a change in government policy and a cessation of state-ordered organized violence against civilians. This change created an opportunity for the HNP to steadily gain the trust of ordinary Haitians. While the police force remains far from perfect, in 2010 both the general population and the residents of IDP camps identified the HNP as their preferred security provider. What is more, the vast majority of respondents believed that strengthening police capacity would make their communities safer.

Almost 64 per cent of the general population referred to the police as the primary actors responsible for security in 2010—up from roughly 50 per cent in 2009. Likewise, IDP camp residents echoed this sentiment, with 63 per cent stating they would turn to the police to safeguard their security. In a country where the police were implicated in widespread human rights violations and where confidence in public institutions was extremely low, these findings offer some grounds for optimism. ◼

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HNP	Haitian National Police
IDP	Internally displaced person
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

ENDNOTES

1   Kolbe et al. (2010) estimates that 158,679 people in the Port-au-Prince area died during the earthquake or in the six-week period afterwards owing to injuries or illness (95% confidence interval: 136,813–180,545). The official estimate established by the Haitian authorities is 222,500 people reported dead and some 1.3 million rendered homeless throughout the country. See GoH (2010a).

2   See OCHA (2011).

3   See Muggah (2010a).

4   See, for example, CIGI (2009; 2010) and ICG (2009).

5   Three recent efforts to begin evaluating the impact of security promotion include Moestue and Muggah (2010), Alda and Willman (2009), and World Bank (2010).

6   See Maguire (2009a); Muggah (2010b; 2008); and Perito (2009).

7   This trend continues into 2011. For example, on 16 January 2011, 'Baby Doc' Duvalier returned to Haiti. His effect on the country was electric. See, for example, Cunningham and Kennedy (2011).

8   In 2006 the United States 'eased', but did not lift, its arms embargo on Haiti. See BBC (2006).

9   See Prengaman (2005).

10   In this context, the United States, France, and Canada led the international community's activities.

11   By 2008, fewer than 100 of these former soldiers remained in the force, with most retiring, voluntarily moving on to other jobs, or being dismissed for various reasons.

12   UN Security Council Resolutions 1529 (2004) and 1542 (2004) set out the mandate of MINUSTAH; see UNSC (2004a; 2004b).

13   Author communication with rule of law programme officers, UN Development Programme, Port-au-Prince, December 2009.

14   The approach to justice system reform is drawn from the following strategic documents: the *Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (GoH, 2007a); the Ministry of Justice 'roadmap' (GoH, 2008); the *HNP Reform Plan* (GoH, 2006); and the *Strategic Plan for the Reform of the Prisons Administration Directorate* (GoH, 2007b)—all of which outline key priorities and areas of investment for the coming years.

15   See GoH (1987, ch. II, arts. 269-1; 272). See also the law of 29 November 1994, which describes the objectives of the police: '*maintenir l'ordre en général et de prêter force à l'exécution de la loi et des règlements*' ('maintain order in general and assist in the execution of the law and regulations') (GoH, 1994, art. 7).

16   See GoH (2010b).

17   Author correspondence with HNP authorities, December 2009.

18   Author correspondence with HNP authorities, December 2009.

19   By way of comparison, some officially reported ratios of officers to civilians include: Japan (1:443), Nigeria (1:400), and South Africa (1:318); European countries report a ratio of roughly 1:250–300. Other developing countries' police-to-citizen ratios are similar to Haiti's, including Ghana (1:1,421), Kenya (1:1,150), Mozambique (1:1,279), and East Timor (1:1,040). See UNDP (2009).

20   The HNP-allocated national operating budgets for 2006–07, 2007–08, and 2008–09 were about USD 89 million, USD 105 million, and USD 118 million, respectively. The budget for 2009–10 suffered a 20 per cent reduction in comparison with the previous budget and was insufficient to meet the operational and capacity development requirements. Multilateral and bilateral donors, such as Brazil, Canada, Spain, and the United States, invested heavily in rebuilding key physical and social infrastructure, training, and promoting more responsible models of policing. See UNDP (2009).

21   Author communication with MINUSTAH civilian personnel, January–March 2010.

22   The international norm is 2.5 m^2 per detainee. See UNSC (2008a, para 38).

23   The Prisons Administration Directorate issued this dire warning: '*La Direction de l'Administration pénitentiaire gère actuellement la situation la plus délicate de son histoire. Elle fait face à une réduction et une fragilité des infrastructures carcérales entraînant une diminution de l'espace cellulaire*' ('The current situation is the most fragile one the Prisons Administration Directorate has ever had to manage. The Directorate is facing the decline and weakness of the prison infrastructure, which leads to a reduction in cell space') (GoH, 2007b).

24   Author interview with Haitian prison authorities, December 2009.

25   See, for example, AI (2006), NYT (2005), Perito (2007), and Stimson Center (2008).

26   See the HNP reform plan (UNSC, 2006). The plan was developed with the technical support of MINUSTAH, the UN Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration, and other agencies and bilateral partners engaged in efforts to strengthen the HNP.

27   See UN (2010).

28   The UN Secretary-General's report on MINUSTAH, dated 1 September 2009, highlights that 'although the capacity of the National Police is gradually improving, it still lacks the force levels, training, equipment and managerial capacity necessary to respond effectively to these threats without external assistance' (UNSC, 2009, para. 21).

29   Author correspondence with a representative of the UN Development Programme, March 2010.

30   For example, the General Directorate was completely destroyed, depriving the high command of the ability to coordinate efficiently an immediate public security response. Author communication with MINUSTAH personnel, March 2010.

31   UN (2010).

32   See, for example, Muggah (2010c).

33 See, for example, UN (n.d.).

34 For example, on 19 January 2010, the UN Security Council endorsed the recommendation made by the Secretary-General to increase MINUSTAH's overall force levels to support immediate recovery, reconstruction, and stability efforts. MINUSTAH was authorized 2,000 additional military troops and 1,500 more international police (UNSC, 2010).

35 See Homeland Security Newswire (2010).

36 See, for example, MSF (2006; 2007) and research generated by the coalition Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development (INURED, n.d.).

37 See, for example, NYT (2010).

38 See, for example, AI (2010).

39 With a 95 per cent confidence interval: 6,726–14,900.

40 Others named as responsible for sexual assaults include neighbours and individuals with whom the victim had a prior relationship or non-sexual friendship.

41 This quote and the following direct quotes attributed to respondents were taken from qualitative interviews conducted as a part of the post-earth-quake assessment survey of the general population. This particular respondent interview was conducted in February 2010 in Port-au-Prince.

42 Author interview with a respondent, Port-au-Prince, March 2010.

43 Meanwhile, another woman praised police for their sensitive response to a local man with mental illness: 'When a crazy man broke into our house and scared my children, my son ran to the police station. They came straight away and, seeing that the man was not in his right mind, they were gentle with him. They took him to [a clinic] where his wife could come for him' (author interview with a respondent, Delmas, February 2010).

44 As described by a taxi driver from Port-au-Prince's Delmas neighbourhood: 'My cousin is in the police so I can call him any time and say, "Hey, this guy stole from me" and they'll come quick. But for the man who doesn't have a friend in the police, he's just out of luck. The police are like any business. You get the best service from those you know personally' (author interview with a respondent, Port-au-Prince, March 2010).

45 Even before the earthquake, the recruitment of the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th promotions were under way. Each batch includes 800 cadets, approximately 15 per cent of whom are female. See UN (2010).

46 Respondents were asked to identify the top two segments of society. Percentages include only those who responded positively when asked if society had too many guns.

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