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## Leadership of the Republic of Kenya in the Multinational Security Support Mission for Haiti: Experience and Lessons for *ad hoc* Coalitions

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**Abstract.** The article examines the role of the Republic of Kenya in providing security beyond the African continent and the potential of an *ad hoc* coalition formed of “secondary” states as an alternative to institutionalized collective security systems in the context of new forms of peacekeeping development. In the 2020s, it became evident that the liberal peacebuilding paradigm was not applicable to Haiti. At present a failed state could not resist the growth of gangsterism without external military support, which has led to a serious security crisis. In October 2023, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorized the deployment of the Kenya-led Multinational Security Support mission (MSS) to assist the Haitian authorities in confronting urban gangs. The mission’s mandate was extended in September 2024. The deployment of this mission signals the start of a new cycle of external intervention in Haiti. The purpose of this article is to analyze the experience and lessons of the formation and functioning of a stabilization *ad hoc* coalition involving “secondary” states, and the role of the leader state (by the example of Kenya) in a changing international environment. The study’s methodology is based on interdisciplinary, historical and systemic approaches. It is stated that the readiness of the Republic of Kenya to lead the coalition forces demonstrates an increased ability of African states to play a leading role in providing security beyond the continent. However, the deployment of the international mission has been significantly delayed. Currently, the stabilization forces have very limited resources and capabilities with which to support the Haitian national police. A thorough examination of the initial phase of the MSS in Haiti confirms the working hypothesis that the effectiveness of the coalition forces is associated with the role of a leading state with international authority and resources for a stabilization or peacekeeping operation. The experience of the initial stage of the coalition forces’ mission revealed a gap between the ambitions of “secondary” states and their capacity to conduct coalition operations independently. Along with the common difficulties of providing predictable and sustainable funding for similar operations, the MSS faced a number of national-level challenges related to the establishment of a legal framework for the deployment of Kenyan peacekeepers to Haiti, as well as a lack of support from the Kenyan opposition and public. It is noted that the United States (US) continues to patron “failed states” and creates coalitions with “secondary” states, involving them in the US geopolitical goals in the Caribbean region achievement.

**Key words:** USA, peacekeeping, regional security, multinational coalitions, stabilization force, reducing violence

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## Лидерство Республики Кения в коалиционных стабилизационных силах для Гаити: опыт и уроки для *ad hoc* коалиций

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**Аннотация.** Рассмотрена роль Республики Кения в стабилизации обстановки вне Африканского континента и потенциал *ad hoc* коалиции, сформированной из «второстепенных» государств, как альтернативы институционализированным системам коллективной безопасности в контексте развития новых форм миротворческой деятельности. В 2020-х гг. либеральная миростроительная парадигма оказалась неприменимой к Гаити — без внешней силовой поддержки государство не смогло противостоять росту бандитизма, что привело к серьезному кризису в сфере безопасности. В октябре 2023 г. для оказания помощи властям Гаити в противостоянии городским бандам Совет Безопасности ООН санкционировал развертывание Многонациональной миссии по поддержке безопасности под руководством Кении, мандат которой был продлен в сентябре 2024 г. Необходимость проведения данной миссии свидетельствует о начале нового цикла внешнего вмешательства в Гаити. Цель исследования — анализ опыта и уроков формирования и функционирования *ad hoc* коалиции из «второстепенных» государств, выполняющей стабилизационные задачи в условиях внутреннего конфликта, и роли государства — лидера коалиции на примере Кении в изменяющейся международной обстановке посредством междисциплинарного, исторического и системного подходов. Автор приходит к выводу, что готовность Республики Кения выступить в качестве государства — лидера коалиционных сил показывает расширение возможностей государств Африки по выполнению ведущих ролей в сфере обеспечения безопасности за пределами континента. Однако процесс развертывания новой миссии существенно затянулся, и в настоящее время стабилизационные силы имеют весьма ограниченные ресурсы и возможности в плане помощи гаитянской полиции. Результаты анализа опыта первого этапа Многонациональной миссии по поддержке безопасности в Гаити подтверждают рабочую гипотезу о том, что эффективность действий коалиционных сил связана с наличием государства-лидера, обладающего международным авторитетом и ресурсами для проведения стабилизационной или миротворческой операции. Отмечается разрыв между амбициями «второстепенных» государств и их возможностями по самостоятельному проведению коалиционных операций. Наряду с общими для аналогичных операций трудностями в обеспечении прогнозируемого и устойчивого финансирования данная миссия столкнулась с рядом проблем национального уровня, включая необходимость формирования правовой базы для направления кенийских миротворцев в Гаити и отсутствие поддержки кенийских оппозиции и общественности. В свою очередь США, поддерживая свои геополитические интересы в Карибском регионе, продолжают играть роль патрона для «несостоявшихся государств» и создают коалиции со «второстепенными» государствами, привлекая их для достижения своих целей.

**Ключевые слова:** США, миротворчество, региональная безопасность, многонациональные коалиции, стабилизационные силы, сокращение насилия

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### Introduction

Following the relative success of stabilizing the security situation in Haiti in 2019, the United Nations (UN) decided to change the format of its long-term peacekeeping

presence and established a special political mission — the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH).

Focusing exclusively on the provision of advisory services and good offices, BINUH

worked primarily with the host state institutions to: strengthen political stability and good governance, including the rule of law; advance a peaceful and stable environment, including by supporting an inclusive inter-Haitian national dialogue; protect and promote human rights; assist the Government of Haiti with its efforts to plan and execute free, fair, and transparent elections; reinforce the capacity of the Haitian National Police (HNP), including through training in human rights and crowd control, respond to gang violence and sexual and gender-based violence, and public order maintenance; develop an inclusive approach with all sectors of society to reduce community violence, and in particular gang violence; address human rights abuses and violations and comply with international human rights obligations and some other tasks.<sup>1</sup>

According to conventional peacebuilding, such a wide variety of actions should have reduced the risk of renewed conflict by strengthening national conflict resolution capacities and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development. However, the UN peacebuilding efforts without “robust” external support have demonstrated the weakness of the “liberal paradigm” of peacebuilding in addressing the underlying political and socio-economic causes of instability, vulnerability and insecurity within the “failed state.”

In the 2020s, the Republic of Haiti experienced an unprecedented surge in crime, which, as a result of the convergence of legal and illegal authorities, acquired the pronounced features of banditry with a political component (Niño & González, 2022). The number of urban gangs grew to two hundred, and their connections with the country’s political and economic

elite, as well as their territorial control, expanded.

Armed criminal structures profited from controlling and providing “coercive protection” to the private sector, and acting as the local coordinators of international criminal networks. This led to a serious insecurity crisis involving large-scale armed attacks on local communities, politicians and journalists, a high level of violence and large-scale forced displacement of the local population.<sup>2</sup>

In this regard, the purpose of the article is to study the activities of the *ad hoc* coalition of “minor” states in stabilizing the next cycle of internal conflict, focusing on the role of the coalition’s leading state — Kenya — in the evolving international landscape.

The study is based on the regime theory, which assumes that the most important means of ensuring security in international relations is their stabilization within the framework of various political institutions.<sup>3</sup>

“Supporters of a realistic theory of international relations adhere to the point of view that the desire of a strong actor to solve those problems that, for some reason, he cannot solve on his own is the driving force for the international regime formation” (Lantsov, 2011, p. 211). In the case of Haiti, the United States can be considered such a “shadow” leader, encouraging other international relations participants to partially bear the costs of maintaining the international stabilization regime in a humanitarian crisis.

Due to declining confidence in international institutions (Komleva, 2024,

<sup>2</sup> Walker S. Gangs of Haiti: Expansion, Power and an Escalating Crisis // Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. October, 2022. <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/haiti-gangs-organized-crime/> (accessed: 05.01.2025).

<sup>3</sup> Konyshov V. N. International Regime Theory. Great Russian Encyclopedia. 2023. No. 1. (In Russian). URL: <https://bigenc.ru/c/teoriia-mezhdunarodnykh-rezhimov-483e05> (accessed: 03.01.2025).

<sup>1</sup> UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2476 // UN. June 25, 2019. (In Russian). URL: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n19/192/55/pdf/n1919255.pdf> (accessed: 03.12.2024).

pp. 184–185), participants in various international unions and coalitions are trying to adopt a more pragmatic approach. According to A.M. Kuznetsov, actors in world politics should be considered “as rational individuals who, when choosing a variant of behavior (strategy), compare various alternatives and make a decision, trying to maximize their own benefits” (Kusnetsov, 2014).

The failure of “institutionalized collective security systems” in Haiti is increasing interest in studying of coalitions actions, including those formed from “minor states,” in the context of the predominance of realist approaches to the use of force (Mearsheimer, 1994, p. 13), as well as the role of the coalition leader state.

The achievement of this goal was facilitated by consistently solving the following tasks:

- consider the response of the international community to the next aggravation of the situation in Haiti, identifying the legal, organizational and practical aspects of forming a new *ad hoc* coalition,
- review the first phase of the MSS, taking into account the experience of peacekeeping operations in Haiti and the existing difficult relations with the host State authorities and population,
- study the factors that determine the possible vectors for the development of this coalition operation.

Throughout the study, the goals used proven heuristic methods of analytical work, including interdisciplinary, systemic and historical approaches. The interdisciplinary approach enabled the multifaceted actions required to ensure security to be taken into account, and allowed the results of political science and related studies on this issue to be integrated comprehensively. The historical approach demonstrates the importance of learning from and drawing on past peacekeeping experience and lessons for the successful implementation of new mission mandates. The systematic approach

enabled the categorization of the challenges faced by *ad hoc* coalitions when attempting to fulfil their stated mandates amid the unstable political and social conditions of the host state.

The results of the analysis of the first phase of the MSS in Haiti can be used in a discussion on the future of collective security systems in the context of emerging polycentrism and growing competition among security providers at various levels (Kharitonova, 2025).

### **International Response to the Deteriorating Situation in Haiti**

In October 2023, the UN Security Council (UNSC) authorized the deployment of an international Multinational Security Support Mission led by Kenya (Multinational Security Support mission to Haiti under Kenya’s leadership) to assist the HNP in suppressing the surge in banditry and restoring security throughout the country.

The resolution, adopted in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter, was drafted by the United States and Ecuador. The new mission was a coalition mission and was not classified as a UN peacekeeping operation.<sup>4</sup>

The reason for the next international intervention in the internal affairs of Haiti was the appeal to the UN of the acting Prime Minister of the country A. Henri after a sharp deterioration in the security situation, which was complicated by brutal armed attacks on the population by gangs, including murders, kidnappings, mass robberies, arson and sexual violence.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2699 // UN. October 2, 2023. (In Russian). URL: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/287/21/pdf/n2328721.pdf> (accessed: 03.01.2025).

<sup>5</sup> The United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: UN Secretary General Report S/2023/492 // UN. July 3, 2023. (In Russian). URL: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/183/35/pdf/n2318335.pdf> (accessed: 03.01.2025).

Since gaining independence at the end of the 18th century, Haiti has experienced only brief periods of stable state power, which were usually ensured by substantial external support. This country is characterized by cyclical crises and internal instability, caused by political and socio-economic factors resulting from long-term US influence. “An ineffective authoritarian system of government has led to the formation of a whole system of structural violence in the country, which, coupled with the poverty of the majority of citizens generating a sense of social isolation and powerlessness and the marginalization of young people, has become a catalyst for internal conflict” (Tishkov, 2020, p. 77). Regular natural disasters and related epidemics have become additional destabilizing factors.<sup>6</sup>

The next phase of the crisis of state institutions in Haiti began on July 7, 2021 after the assassination of President J. Moïse. This was further complicated by the ensuing catastrophic earthquake, killing 2,200 people and causing material damage amounting to USD 1.1 billion. While the government managed to maintain a certain level of public order until autumn 2022, the energy crisis of 2023 led to mass protests that escalated into bloody clashes (Alabr, Levshakova & Kuzmina, 2024, p. 30).

The new phase of the crisis has revealed that years of international assistance have failed to establish a competent Haitian police force and to strengthen the rule of law (Ciorciari, 2022). The HNP could only

temporarily maintain public security in certain areas, and its officers were increasingly targeted by heavily armed gangs. Between January and June 2023, 34 police officers were killed (22 of them in the line of duty) and another 31 were injured (23 of them in the line of duty). Furthermore, by 30 June 2023, armed gangs had attacked or vandalized 34 police stations, 412 Haitian police facilities were not functioning due to gang attacks.<sup>7</sup>

Reports by UN officials, alongside an increase in criminal activity by urban gangs, recorded cases of popular justice (lynching) committed by members of the *Bwa Kale* self-defense movement (*Bwa Kale* in Creole, meaning *Peeled Wood* in English). The response of the local population was characterized by an extreme form of cruelty, including the stoning and burning of individuals suspected of participating in banditry. For example, from April 24 to June 20, 2023, dozens of suspected bandits and their alleged accomplices were lynched by local residents in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince. The activities of *Bwa Kale* movement soon spread to all 10 departments of Haiti, causing the response from urban gangs.<sup>8</sup>

In response to the new crisis in Haiti, the UNSC authorized the deployment of specialized international forces to assist the HNP in countering the escalation of banditry<sup>9</sup> and restoring security. The MSS was intended to

<sup>7</sup> The United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: UN Secretary General Report S/2023/492 // UN. July 3, 2023. (In Russian). URL: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/183/35/pdf/n2318335.pdf> (accessed: 03.01.2025).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> The International Crisis Group estimates, that by July 2023, gangs controlled about 80% of Port-au-Prince, restricting movement in the city, in the area of ports and the container terminal. They twice blocked Haiti's main oil terminal, creating fuel shortages. Gang actions disrupted supply chains, driving up food prices and shortages of basic necessities. See: *Haitians Turn to Mob Justice as the Gang Threat Festers* // ReliefWeb. July 3, 2023. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/haitians-turn-mob-justice-gang-threat-festers> (accessed: 25.12.2024).

<sup>6</sup> K. Heusgen, the German Ambassador to the UN, noted that since 2011, the UN Security Council has repeatedly expressed its concern about Haiti's vulnerability to climate change. He added that the climate is a “threat multiplier” which could destabilize Haiti and “create new conflicts due to reduced resources, thereby undermining peace-building and stabilization efforts.” See: *Security Council Approves ‘Historic’ Political Haiti Mission, Ending UN Peacekeeping Role in the Country* // UN News. June 25, 2019. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/06/1041291> (accessed: 03.01.2024).

ensure that millions of Haitians in need have access to humanitarian assistance and ensure the security of critical infrastructure, social facilities, and major transport hubs, such as airports and city ports.

In his statement following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2476 (2019), US Representative D. Delaurentis mentioned that this decision was an effective measure to create a “new model for maintaining global peace and security” and help a member state facing a multidimensional crisis. The diplomat stated that the deployment of the MSS as a specialized format to support the HNP is only part of a larger effort to overcome the next crisis in the humanitarian, economic and political spheres.<sup>10</sup>

Given its age-old interests in Haiti, the United States has pledged financial support for the new mission and undoubtedly played a key role in choosing the state — the leader of the multinational force.<sup>11</sup>

Such an unobvious and ambiguous choice seems to be largely related to the intensification of US cooperation with its long-standing ally, the Republic of Kenya, whom Washington considers to be its main partner in sub-Saharan Africa. During the state visit of Kenyan President W. Ruto to Washington in May 2024, US President J. Biden granted the Republic of Kenya the status of a “major ally outside the North Atlantic Alliance,” expanding the scope of US support in the defense trade and security cooperation, including police capacity development. Meanwhile, Ruto stated that his country’s

participation in the MSS would give Kenya international prestige and enhance its role in international relations as a potential “world gendarme.”<sup>12</sup>

While Kenya does have some experience in peacekeeping, it is not among the top 30 troop-contributing countries for UN operations. Officially, 442 Kenyan peacekeepers are serving in six UN peacekeeping missions, including fragile regions such as the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of South Sudan.<sup>13</sup>

Supporters of Kenya’s new international role argue that the decision to participate in the *ad hoc* coalition is based on the country’s foreign policy goals of committing to peace, stability and humanitarian support. Opponents of the deployment of Kenyan forces in Haiti are questioning the reasons behind Nairobi’s participation in the MSS: is it a voluntary initiative, a search for a reason for financial assistance, or the result of external pressure?<sup>14</sup> The Kenyan public has some doubts about the consistency of country’s leadership in the new stabilization mission with its foreign policy interests, the

<sup>10</sup> Security Council Approves ‘Historic’ Political Haiti Mission, Ending UN Peacekeeping Role in the Country // UN News. June 25, 2019. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/06/1041291> (accessed: 03.01.2024).

<sup>11</sup> Previous stabilization interventions, such as Operation Uphold Democracy in 1994-1995, were carried out by US and allied forces. Therefore, taking into account its geopolitical interests and commitment to short-term peacekeeping actions (*early in, early out*), French-speaking Canada could be the likely leader of the stabilization forces.

<sup>12</sup> See: Biden Included Kenya Among the Main US Allies Outside NATO // TASS. June 24, 2024. (In Russian). URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/21190003> (accessed: 03.01.2025); Labutina D. Key Non-NATO Partner: Why the US Is Strengthening Its Position in Kenya // TASS. June 3, 2024. (In Russian). URL: <https://tass.ru/opinions/20981219> (accessed: 03.01.2025).

<sup>13</sup> See: Troop and Police Contributors // UN Peacekeeping. (In Russian). URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/ru/troop-and-police-contributors> (accessed: 03.01.2025); Kenya // UN Peacekeeping. (In Russian). URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/ru/kenya> (accessed: 03.01.2025).

<sup>14</sup> The MSS Force Commander Otunj stated that on February 23, 2025, one of the Kenyan officers was mortally wounded during an operation in the Artibonite Department. See: Kenya’s Haiti Gamble: First Casualty in a War Far from Home // Kenyan Foreign Policy. February 24, 2025. URL: <https://kenyanforeignpolicy.com/kenyas-haiti-gamble-first-casualty-in-a-war-far-from-home/> (accessed: 25.02.2025).

commensurate potential risks to Kenyan peacekeepers and the country's reputation with the benefits that this mission can bring.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the participation of Kenyan police officers in an external force stabilization operation could have a certain negative impact at a national level, given the militarization of internal stability and the weakening of civilian control over national law enforcement forces (Kenkel, 2021).

### Deployment of International Stabilization Mission

Studies of *ad hoc* coalition missions conducted without UN support demonstrate that the deployment of such operations can encounter significant operational challenges (Bokeriya & Degterev, 2024, p. 360).

The MSS organizational problems that caused long-term delays in the staff deployment were not only related to a lack of financial resources. Despite the approval in November 2023 by Kenya's Parliament and Cabinet of the deployment of 1,000 police officers to Haiti, in January 2024 the proposed deployment was temporarily blocked by the Supreme Court of Kenya. The presiding judge said declared the deployment of national police forces abroad to be unconstitutional due to the lack of a mutual reciprocal agreement between the two countries on cooperation.<sup>16</sup>

According to Kenyan researcher K. Opala, in its haste to execute the mission to Haiti, the Kenyan government overlooked a number of obligations, including constitutional provisions,

public participation and perception and available alternatives (*for example, deployment of an African Union (AU) multinational stabilization force led by Kenya*) (emphasis mine. — S.T.).<sup>17</sup>

To address these legal gaps, the leaders of Haiti and Kenya had planned to sign a bilateral agreement on March 1, 2024. However, the signing process was disrupted by coordinated attacks by Haitian gangs on critical infrastructure in the country, including the airport and prisons. These large-scale criminal attacks resulted in A. Henri's resignation in April 2024, leading to the establishment of the Transitional Presidential Council, which supported the mission of the international stabilization forces.<sup>18</sup>

The first group of 200 Kenyan police officers was due to arrive in Haiti on 23–24 May 2024, coinciding with the state visit of Kenyan President W. Ruto to the United States. The elite officers are drawn from Kenya's Police Recce Squad, Rapid Deployment Force and Special Operation Group. The latter have been fighting terrorists and insurgents along the Kenya — Somalia border<sup>19</sup> and they are ready to robust actions. Half of the contingent is expected to secure critical infrastructure facilities, including the airport, while the rest will be involved in close-quarter combat against the gangs.

By the end of 2023, a team of Kenyan reconnaissance officers and senior police personnel had undergone special pre-mission

<sup>15</sup> Maina M. Kenya's Haiti Mission: Financial Gains or Genuine Empathy? // Kenyan Foreign Policy. September 25, 2023. URL: [https://kenyanforeignpolicy.com/kenyas-haiti-mission-financial-gains-or-genuine-empathy/#google\\_vignette](https://kenyanforeignpolicy.com/kenyas-haiti-mission-financial-gains-or-genuine-empathy/#google_vignette) (accessed: 25.12.2024).

<sup>16</sup> Opala K. Kenya's High Court Blocks Proposal to Send Police Support to Haiti // Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. February 5, 2024. URL: <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/kenyas-high-court-blocks-proposal-police-support-haiti/> (accessed: 25.12.2024).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> UN Welcomes Haiti's Transitional Presidential Council // CNG Media. April 26, 2024. URL: <https://caribbeannewsglobal.com/un-welcomes-haitis-transitional-presidential-council/> (accessed: 16.04.2025).

<sup>19</sup> Opala K. Green Light for Kenyan Police Boots on the Ground in Haiti // Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. May 15, 2024. URL: <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/green-light-for-kenyan-police-boots-on-the-ground-in-haiti/> (accessed: 25.12.2024).

training in the United States.<sup>20</sup> However, by June 2024, only around 400 Kenyan peacekeepers had been deployed to Haiti as part of a mission authorised for around 2,500 personnel.<sup>21</sup>

Deployed MSS personnel began joint operations with the HNP and Haitian armed forces in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, resulting in initial successes in curbing gang activity in a number of areas and regaining control of critical infrastructure, including the airport and the general hospital. The deployment of MSS has also had some encouraging “psychological” impact on the local population, reinforcing Haitians’ positive expectations of the prospects for improved security. Despite these initial achievements, however, there has been no significant improvement in the security situation. To this end, the MSS needs to continue deploying personnel to expand its operational reach by actively patrolling public places with an unfavorable criminal situation in order to increase the “effect of the presence” of international forces and establish contact with the local population.

On January 18, 2025, a new group of 217 Kenyan police officers arrived in Haiti. The strength of the MSS increased up to 781 people, including 150 peacekeepers from Guatemala, 23 from Jamaica, 8 each from El Salvador and the Bahamas, and 2 from Belize.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Opala K. Green Light for Kenyan Police Boots on the Ground in Haiti // Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. May 15, 2024. URL: <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/green-light-for-kenyan-police-boots-on-the-ground-in-haiti/> (accessed: 25.12.2024).

<sup>21</sup> UN: Deploy New Haiti Mission to Restore Security // Human Rights Watch. December 9, 2024. URL: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/09/un-deploy-new-haiti-mission-restore-security> (accessed: 04.02.2025).

<sup>22</sup> Speech by Ms. Maria Isabel Salvador, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of BINUH: Briefing to the UN Security Council (22 January 2025) // BINUH. January 1, 2025. URL: <https://binuh.unmissions.org/en/speech-ms-maria-isabel-salvador-special-representative-secretary-general-haiti-and-head-binuh> (accessed: 24.02.2025).

However, even a year and a half after the establishment of the MSS, the planned mission strength has not been achieved, which suggests a protracted period of deployment and, therefore, a loss of responsiveness to the crisis as the main advantage of coalition operations (Karlsrud & Reykers, 2020, pp. 1524–1525).

In such circumstances, the role of the MSS leader state has increased. This requires the Republic of Kenya to engage in political efforts to develop close cooperation with leading world states, international donors, Haiti’s allies and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states participating in stabilization forces.

Thus, the protracted deployment of the MSS to Haiti is largely linked to the challenges Kenya faces. Therefore, the working hypothesis that the efficiency and effectiveness of the coalition forces is associated with the presence of a leading state with international authority and resources for a stabilization or peacekeeping operation can be considered confirmed.

### **The First Stage of the MSS Through the Prism of Peacekeeping Experience**

It is important to note that, given the cyclical nature of the Haitian crises, the new stabilization operation needed to draw on previous international interventions, such as those during the deep institutional crisis of 2003–2004 (Cockayne, 2009; Hoelscher & Norheim-Martinsen, 2014; Borzova & Kuzmina, 2015; Tishkov, 2017; Schuberth, 2019; Toro Nesterenko & Sakhansky, 2023; Borzova & Da Costa, 2024; Ortega García, Yepes Hernández & Mesa Bedoya, 2024). This cycle included coalition stabilization actions, peacekeeping and, finally, peace-building under the UN flag.

On February 29, 2004, the UNSC decided to deploy for a period of three months a Multinational Interim Force (MNF) consisting of contingents from the United States, France



and Canada to assist achieve security and stability in Haiti, as well as to support the Haitian police and coast guard to restore law and order and protect human rights.<sup>23</sup>

The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (*MINUSTAH*) continued MNF's short-term normalization activities from June 2004 to October 2017.<sup>24</sup> These active military-police operations in conjunction with Haitian police officers, has achieved some success in combating urban gangs in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, as well as in monitoring public security in the country and reducing violence in local communities (Tishkov, 2017, pp. 180–181). The UN Mission to Support the Justice Sector in Haiti (*MINUJUSTH*, October 2017 — October 2019) as the *MINUSTAH* successor included up to seven formed police units consisting of up to 980 police officers (Verbilov, Oparin & Sozina, 2018, p. 63).

It should be emphasized that the shortcomings of the institutionalized approach to security problems were manifested in the UN Security Council's gradual reduction of attention to Haiti as it transferred its focus to Colombia. The shifting priority of international action has led to a wait-and-see approach in peacekeepers' actions during the two-year *MINUJUSTH* mandate. At the same time, UN functionaries did not pay sufficient attention to the signs of a worsening security situation in Haiti noted in the Secretary-General's report for August 2018<sup>25</sup> due to an increase in "criminal activity of urban gangs" and "a significant surge in violence."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1529 // UN. February 29, 2004. (In Russian). URL: [https://undocs.org/ru/S/RES/1529\(2004\)](https://undocs.org/ru/S/RES/1529(2004)) (accessed: 26.12.2024).

<sup>24</sup> *MINUSTAH* Fact Sheet // UN Peacekeeping. (In Russian). URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/ru/mission/minustah> (accessed: 12.12.2024).

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General S/2018/795 // UN. August 30, 2018. URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2018/795> (accessed: 16.04.2025).

<sup>26</sup> Di Razza N. Mission in Transition: Planning for the End of UN Peacekeeping in Haiti // International Peace

UN peacekeeping in Haiti in 2004–2019 and the subsequent security crisis during the BINUH period, confirm the thesis that "in countries with weak executive powers that do not control the territory in which numerous illegal paramilitary groups operate, relative security is only achieved due to the presence of peacekeepers" (Andreeva, 2019, p. 57). According to A.A. Andreeva, "The level of violence increases again after the withdrawal of international troops, therefore, a constant presence of peacekeeping missions is required in 'fragile' states" (Andreeva, 2019, p. 57).

The current situation in Haiti is characterized by a large-scale humanitarian crisis associated with the aggravation of violence (Ortega García, Yepes Hernández & Mesa Bedoya, 2024, p. 111), which has displaced more than 700,000 people.<sup>27</sup> In this regard, in September 2024, the UNSC extended the mandate of the MSS for another 12 months.<sup>28</sup> Despite the numerous challenges encountered by the new coalition mission, the extension of its mandate demonstrates the UNSC's commitment to finding and implementing adaptable solutions to security problems of "failed states."

It seems that the unanimous support of UNSC members for Resolution 2751 (2024) can be seen as a call to accelerate the deployment of a stabilization mission in Haiti. It is important to note that the MSS does not receive the financial, logistical or infrastructural support that the UN provides to its field operations. The resolution states that the UN Secretary

Institute. 2018. P. 38. URL: <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/IPI-Rpt-Mission-in-TransitionHaiti.pdf> (accessed: 16.04.2025).

<sup>27</sup> Letter Dated 30 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2653 (2022) Addressed to the President of the Security Council // United Nations Digital Library. September 30, 2024. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4064700?ln=en&v=pdf> (accessed: 25.12.2024).

<sup>28</sup> UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2751 (2024) // UN. September 30, 2024. (In Russian). URL: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/278/08/pdf/n2427808.pdf> (accessed: 26.12.2024).

General can provide logistical support at the request of the mission, subject to full financial reimbursement from existing voluntary contributions and compliance with the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.<sup>29</sup>

The sustainability of the MSS depends on adequate and stable funding, predominantly from voluntary and earmarked contributions from member states, which is a major challenge. By October 2024, the mission had received only around USD 400 million of its declared annual budget of USD 600 million, provided through bilateral contributions and through the UN-managed trust fund, which received USD 85 million.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the slow disbursement of pledges<sup>31</sup> and the limited number of donors further exacerbate the financial challenges of the MSS.

The difficulties in ensuring sustainable funding for MSS reflect those faced by regional and subregional actors and *ad hoc* coalitions in Africa when deploying personnel and acquiring adequate equipment, particularly when funded through trust funds and external donor support (Khudaykulova, 2023, p. 355). Therefore, these aspects should be taken into account for future missions authorized by the UNSC without appropriate funding from the UN peacekeeping budget (Tishkov, 2024, p. 141).

<sup>29</sup> UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2751 (2024) // UN. September 30, 2024. (In Russian). URL: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/278/08/pdf/n2427808.pdf> (accessed: 26.12.2024).

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti. Report of the Secretary-General S/2024/742 // UN. October 15, 2024. URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/742> (accessed: 25.12.2024).

<sup>31</sup> For example, in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the US Congress, Republicans blocked the funding requested by the US government for the MSS, demanding more detailed information about the logistics, duration and goals of the mission. See: Who Is in Charge of the Haiti Mission? // Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. June 18, 2024. URL: <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/who-is-in-charge-of-the-haiti-mission/> (accessed: 25.12.2024).

## Interaction with the Host State

Given that the MSS is conducted by coalition forces outside the region of the leader state, partnership and constant exchange of information with the host government, as well as proper interaction with Haitian society should be considered as important conditions for the mission effectiveness.

The perception by many Haitians of a new international stabilization mission as another foreign intervention with unclear goals and incapable of a quick crisis resolution undermines public support for the MSS. Therefore, it is important to convey to local residents the mission's goals and the criteria for achieving progress and to suppress possible misinformation by increasing the openness of the work of international forces. It is necessary to take into account the problems of the language barrier that peacekeepers who do not speak French or Creole previously faced in Haiti. This problem can be partially solved after the announced arrival of contingents from francophone countries in Africa.<sup>32</sup>

Many Haitian civil society organizations are willing to support the MSS to ensure national stability. However, the international presence must be temporary.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the new mission needs to expand its engagement with all segments of the fragmented civil

<sup>32</sup> Benin and Chad, as well as Bangladesh, expressed their readiness to participate in the IISB along with the Caribbean Community states. See: Wabwireh D. Haiti: Imminent Deployment of Kenya-led International Police Force // AfricaNews. June 6, 2024. URL: <https://www.africanews.com/2024/06/10/haiti-imminent-deployment-of-kenya-led-international-police-force/> (accessed: 27.12.2024).

<sup>33</sup> The MINUSTAH Force Commander in 2007–2009, Lieutenant General C.A. dos Santos Cruz, noted the need for international forces to understand the position of local partners and national authorities: "It is an illusion to think that the UN is going there to find solutions. The decision depends on the Haitians, the government and the public working in Haiti." See: Interview: How New Mission Could Support Gang-Ravaged Haiti // UN News. October 2, 2023. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1141757> (accessed: 27.12.2024).

society of the host state, including human rights and women's organizations, youth, as well as the Haitian diaspora, so that the activities of the MSS meet the needs and priorities of the local population.

Given the negative lessons of peacekeeping in Haiti related to massive human rights violations and sexual exploitation (King et al., 2021), the UNSC instructed the Ministry of Internal Affairs to establish a reliable mechanism to ensure compliance with international standards and prevent human rights violations and abuses.<sup>34</sup>

We would like to point out, that the Kenya's police forces have undoubtedly gained experience in stabilizing crisis situations under the UN and AU mandate (*for example, in Somalia and South Sudan*). However, a number of international and national human rights organizations note a high level of corruption and human rights violations in the Kenyan police.<sup>35</sup> In this regard, despite the existing rules of conduct and pre-mission training programmes for MSS personnel, the vulnerability of civilians to human rights violations and abuses cannot be ruled out. Security responses to organized crime and criminal activity by urban gangs can lead to increased conflict and domestic violence, and thus human rights violations (Bokeriya & Degterev, 2024, p. 260). Therefore, balanced and law-based approaches to the use of force by stabilization units are of paramount importance to eliminate possible mistrust between local communities, the HNP and the MSS.

After the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2476 (2019), Zhang Jun, the Ambassador

and Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China (PRC), stated that his country has always adopted a responsible approach to the application by the UNSC of the UN Charter Chapter VII, authorizing the use of force. He added that the actions of the MSS should be aimed at support of the local population. He called on the mission to comply with international law, preventing the violation of Haiti's sovereignty. Participating countries were encouraged to ensure the highest standards of conduct and discipline for their personnel, and to establish an oversight mechanism to prevent human rights violations or abuses, including sexual exploitation.<sup>36</sup>

In our opinion, given the parallel deployment of the UN special political mission and the *ad hoc* coalition stabilization forces, the role of the external oversight mechanism can be exercised by the relevant entities of BINUH, for example, those responsible for ensuring compliance with international human rights obligations.

### Future of the MSS

Long-term stability undoubtedly goes beyond short-term stabilization tasks and therefore requires efforts to address the root causes of the crisis. This requires securing borders to curb the illicit trade of drugs and arms, strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies to investigate gang leaders and prosecute perpetrators, and addressing the underlying social and economic problems, such as poverty, unemployment and social inequality, that create an enabling environment for the spread of urban gangs.

Therefore, in general, the mandate of the MSS broadly extends beyond the immediate security concerns of Haiti, including the

<sup>34</sup> Poincy J. Rethinking the International Response to Haiti's Security Crisis // Stimson Center. July 23, 2024. URL: <https://www.stimson.org/2024/rethinking-the-international-response-to-haitis-security-crisis> (accessed: 25.02.2025).

<sup>35</sup> Robles F., Dahir A. L. Haiti, Desperate for Peace, Turns to Police Notorious for Violence // The New York Times. October 4, 2023. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/world/africa/kenya-police-haiti.html> (accessed: 25.12.2024).

<sup>36</sup> Mishra V. Security Council Authorizes 'Historic' Support Mission in Haiti // UN News. October 2, 2023. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1141802> (accessed: 25.12.2024).

creation of an enabling environment for elections.<sup>37</sup>

In this situation, the future of this operation is being discussed at the UN. In the general understanding of the need for additional international support for Haiti, there is no consensus among Member States on the choice of specific assistance mechanisms.

Negotiations in the UNSC on the extension of the mandate of the MSS in September 2024 and the subsequent official request of the Haitian authorities to the Secretary General to urgently transform the mission into a UN peacekeeping operation provoked debate among member states. This proposal was supported by the United States, Kenya, member countries of the Organization of American States, as well as a number of other UN Security Council members.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, some UNSC member states, including the Russian Federation, opposing the premature transformation of the MSS into a UN peacekeeping operation, emphasized that the stabilization forces led by Kenya did not receive the declared funding and did not achieve full efficiency of actions. The PRC representatives also expressed some skepticism, noting that discussions on the transformation of the MSS could distract donors from efforts to bring Kenyan-led forces to maximum potential.<sup>39</sup>

Some researchers argue that providing logistical support packages to regional actors authorised by the UN Security Council can be considered an alternative solution to

transforming the MSS into a full-scale peacekeeping mission.<sup>40</sup> However, the experience of *ad hoc* coalition missions shows significant limitations of this approach in the context of force operations.<sup>41</sup>

While the potential benefits of transforming the stabilisation mission into a UN peacekeeping mission may include increased international political support, the possible transformation must be carried out in accordance with a clear political strategy and an objective assessment of potential risks. The type and structure of a potential peacekeeping operation, given its role in Haiti's political processes, would seem to deserve attention. A multidimensional UN peacekeeping mission, uniting military, police and civilian actors, could contribute to the comprehensive elimination of the causes of the conflict. However, the long experience of the UN peacekeeping presence in Haiti shows that such a transformation will significantly increase the cost of an operation that does not guarantee the elimination of the causes of conflict (Olivier, 2023).

It is important to mention that the international response to the situation in Haiti is also a topic of discussion in academia. For example, participants in a seminar held in November 2024 by the International Peace Institute noted that in the current conditions of Haiti, the capabilities of the UN peacekeeping operation may not be enough, since the security situation is much worse than during the deployment of MINUSTAH. It was also noted during the seminar that the future of the MSS could be influenced by US domestic policy, including the position of the new D. Trump

<sup>37</sup> Blondel P. Haiti's Destiny 'Bright' Despite Terrifying Escalation of Violence // UN News. December 27, 2024. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158481> (accessed: 04.01.2025).

<sup>38</sup> UN: Deploy New Haiti Mission to Restore Security // Human Rights Watch. December 9, 2024. URL: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/09/un-deploy-new-haiti-mission-restore-security> (accessed: 04.02.2025).

<sup>39</sup> Segura R., Forti D. Weighing the Case for a New Peacekeeping Mission to Haiti // The International Crisis Group. November 1, 2024. URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/caribbean/haiti/weighing-case-new-peacekeeping-mission-haiti> (accessed: 04.01.2025).

<sup>40</sup> Wane El-G., Williams P.D., Kihara-Hunt A. The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities // UN Peacekeeping. October, 2024. P. 37. URL: [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/the\\_future\\_of\\_peacekeeping\\_new\\_models\\_and\\_related\\_capabilities\\_-\\_nov1.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/the_future_of_peacekeeping_new_models_and_related_capabilities_-_nov1.pdf) (accessed: 24.02.2025).

<sup>41</sup> This thesis can be illustrated by the support of the UN for the AU operation in Somalia through the UN Support Office and the UN Support Office in Somalia.

administration and the new Congress composition, both of which could significantly alter the mission's overall trajectory and the level of US support for its activities.<sup>42</sup>

Confirmation of this thesis is Washington's failure to fulfill its obligations to finance the MSS in the amount of USD 360 million. Currently, the United States has allocated only USD 1.7 million of the first installment of USD 15 million, promised to the UN. The United States was frozen USD 13.3 million due to the 90-day pause in the provision of foreign aid to African countries, which was announced by President Trump.<sup>43</sup>

The need to study Washington's position on this issue is supported by several authors' views that the United States does not abandon its ambitions or its role as the "organizer of destinies" of failed states, and actively uses flexible formats of interaction with secondary states to respond quickly to emerging challenges (Bogdanov, 2022, p. 12). At the same time, D. Pierre, an American researcher of Haitian origin, notes that in accordance with the strategy adopted in 2019 for the use of "hard" and "soft power" of the United States in a changing world (*Global Fragility Act*), Haiti is the first country in the target five for the implementation of this strategy (Pierre, 2023).

## Conclusion

Taking into account gradual reduction in large-scale UN peacekeeping operations, the UNSC decision to deploy the MSS to Haiti can

be considered as a significant event in the practice of the international response to deteriorating the regional security and support for "failed states." The proposed new model for forming stabilization forces emphasizes the growing importance of *ad hoc* coalition missions in ensuring regional stability amid emerging polycentrism.

This trend can be seen as a confirmation of the failure of neoliberal concepts of international institutions and regimes in the context of the predominance of realistic approaches to the use of force to resolve internal conflicts and crises, since international institutions and regimes tend to reflect the interests of States based on the international distribution of force.

Amid a growing crisis of confidence in international institutions, UN member states are implementing a pragmatic approach to international relations, looking for alternative solutions and making decisions that allow them to maximize their own benefits from international action.

In this context, the international stabilization forces leader state deserves informed attention. The choice of Kenya, located outside the operation region and not recognized as well-known security provider, demonstrates the possible expansion of the ability of African states to play leading security roles outside the continent. The leadership of the Republic of Kenya in the new coalition operation could increase its international status to the level of a potential "world gendarme," expand the training opportunities of security sector personnel and the scope of military-technical cooperation with the United States.

The Republic of Kenya's experience of participating in international stabilization in Haiti demonstrates the gap between the ambitions of "secondary" states and their ability to conduct coalition operations independently. The effectiveness of the coalition forces depends on the presence of a

<sup>42</sup> Emerging Practices in New Mission Models: The Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti // International Peace Institute. December 5, 2024. P. 4. URL: <https://www.ipinst.org/2024/12/emerging-practices-in-new-mission-models-the-multinational-security-support-mission-in-haiti> (accessed: 25.02.2025).

<sup>43</sup> Ndiritu S. Ch. UN's Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) to Haiti's Falls, and with Kenyans' Lives // New Eastern Outlook. April 11, 2025. URL: <https://journal-neo.su/2025/04/11/uns-multinational-security-support-mission-mss-to-haitis-falls-and-with-kenyans-lives/> (accessed: 16.04.2025).

leader state with international authority and resources for the operation. The protracted phase of the MSS deployment shows that, in order to fulfill the mandate, the mission, along with political support, is in dire need of predictable and stable funding, personnel and related equipment. These problems offset the main advantage of coalition actions associated with the quick response to the crisis. Therefore, the leadership role requires Kenya to develop close cooperation with international donors, Haiti's allies, and Caribbean Community member states participating in the MSS through political efforts.

As with similar operations, securing predictable and sustainable funding was difficult, and the mission faced a number of national-level challenges. These included establishing a legal framework for deploying Kenyan peacekeepers to Haiti, and a lack of support from the Kenyan opposition and public.

The formation of the MSS demonstrates the readiness of the United States for active search of new forms of cooperation with “secondary” states to realize its geopolitical

interests in the Caribbean region and patronage of “failed states.” However, in modern conditions, the principle of “Doing More with Less” cannot be implemented for “failed states” stabilization.

In the context of the protracted deployment of MSS, the Haitian authorities have expressed their desire to transform this mission into a UN peacekeeping operation, mainly, due to financial difficulties and a lack of resources for the stabilization forces, rather than a critical assessment of UN peacekeeping as the most suitable tool for Haiti. However, the UNSC and member states need to take into account the questionable experience of peacekeeping in Haiti, especially in light of the lack of confidence of the local population, and apply a balanced approach and objective analysis of potential risks. This mission operates in densely populated urban areas, which makes it difficult for peacekeepers to serve, taking into account the need to minimize damage to civilians. The MSS must therefore be thoughtful in its operations to ensure the safety and security of both the local population and its own personnel.

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