

Testimony of **Mark L. Schneider**, Senior Vice President, *International Crisis Group* to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

“After the Earthquake: Empowering Haiti to Rebuild Better”

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Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and the ranking member and the Committee as a whole for continuing its bi-partisan support for a long-term commitment by the United States to Haiti’s recovery, sustainable rebuilding and “re-founding”.

There are more than a million Haitians in shelters—men, women and children. In the aftermath of the worst natural disaster in the history of the hemisphere, their lives and futures remain extremely fragile. With tropical storms anticipated and an approaching hurricane season, the physical threats facing the people in 1,282 spontaneous camps and collective centers in 13 municipalities including the capital, Port-au-Prince, are real. While the most vulnerable are being moved, not all have been and others who have not been classified as “most vulnerable” probably should be.

There is an urgent need for decisions on resettlement strategy by the Government of Haiti with OCHA, MINUSTAH, the U.S. and others and the funds identified to begin rapidly to execute that strategy.

I returned from Haiti last Thursday night after four days on the ground in Port-au-Prince. It was my second visit there since January 12. As you know the Crisis Group has been analyzing the factors driving conflict in Haiti since 2004. Our focus always emphasizes security, governance and the underlying political stability of the country. Our last report on March 31, the same day as the UN donor conference, underscored that stability depended on a reconstruction program based on broad political and social consensus and Haitian ownership, a transparent and accountable multi donor funding mechanism and an efficient Haitian government-led implementing structure that could move rapidly enough to instill confidence in Haitians and domestic and foreign investors and that answered the questions of democratic governance and the rule of law, as a matter of urgency. Some of those questions have been partially answered, others still require both decisions and action.

We pointed out in our March 31 report [Haiti: Stabilisation and Reconstruction after the Quake](#) that most of Haiti’s parliamentarians’ terms were about to expire, which they did, on May 10. President Préval is in his final year in office as are the country’s mayors and the

obstacles standing in the way of credible elections have to be overcome. We said then that the continuing presence of the UN peacekeeping force was essential both to support the Haitian National Police (HNP) in making Haiti safer and to protect civilians, particularly women and children within IDP camps, where a now even weaker HNP is unable to do so. After my visit there this past week, it is clear that all of those recommendations remain valid. There has been some progress in many arenas—just not enough and not fast enough.

The Congress has to move in one key area. The emergency supplemental proposal for \$2.8 billion for Haiti reconstruction was submitted by the Obama Administration on 24 March. We urged that it be submitted even earlier but compared to past timeframes it was among the speediest after natural disasters, as was the March 31 donor conference. The supplemental has not yet reached the floor in either House. In general I know there is strong Congressional support for this measure and it must be passed soon. Failure to have the authority to spend those resources will increasingly bind the hands of project and program managers in USAID, the State Department and Treasury—and send the wrong message to other donors.

In assessing the current situation, we can look first the progress: The donor conference—which took place far more quickly than the response to the 2008 hurricanes—was a success and \$5.2 billion was pledged for the first 18 months to carry out the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti (PARDN), proposed by the Haitian government with the aid of international experts, as part of its \$10 billion decade-long recovery plan. It included a multi-donor trust fund, and a hybrid Haiti/international Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission (IHRC) with parallel auditing, decentralization, regional development hubs and a call for vast investment in human and physical infrastructure as well as encouraging state institution-building.

President Préval and PM Bellerive—despite the political risk involved—won parliamentary approval for the IHRC. Last Monday Préval also co-chaired a meeting on elections with the UN SRSG and specifically supported holding parliamentary and presidential elections according to the Constitution on November 28. Parliament also took action to avoid any jerry-rigged transitional government next year if there is unavoidable delay of a few days in the election calendar. Préval recently endorsed in writing the findings of UN and OAS assessment teams and announced on the radio that the election would be scheduled for 28 November, tasking the provincial electoral council and the donors to meet that deadline.

Also positive is the news that former Prime Minister Marc Bazin has gathered another five former prime ministers representing different ideologies in a Forum of Former Prime Ministers. They have stated their willingness to serve as “senior statesmen” offering independent advice and counsel to the government. Préval has indicated a willingness to engage with them for that purpose.

During my previous visit to Haiti in March there was no agreement on where to move the most vulnerable people in the shelters and some victims were still waiting for tarps or tents. It now appears that most Haitians in need have received a tent or tarps—covering more than 1.5 million people. There are two functioning official government camp sites, at Corail Cesselesse and Tabarre Issa, where with international support, tents, basic access to water and sanitation, food, security, and lights have been provided to some 7200 individuals. There

are the beginnings of a more robust HNP and UN Police presence around the camps. Haitian agriculture production is up, and the US approval of new legislation that increases the window for Haitian textile imports also should also boost jobs in that industry and Haitian agriculture production is up. And about 100,000 or more Haitians are receiving cash for work on a two week revolving basis.

This progress would be seen as quite significant if the magnitude of the challenges were not so immense.

Second, the challenges:

Everything needs to move faster. Plans exist on paper but the decisions about alternatives remain unclear. Few of the implementing mechanisms are in place. Fifteen of the countries' 17 ministry buildings collapsed in the quake. Now the trailer, Quonset hut and open air tents that house a small portion of ministry employees also serve as physical reminders of the devastation suffered by state institutions.

- Security has been negatively affected by the escape of more than 4000 prisoners from the national penitentiary, including some hundreds of gang members and serious criminals. According to the HNP, a total of 567 have been recaptured, and a few others killed and the prison population is now back up to 800. However, there is little question that the gang members are trying to sink their roots into their old or new impoverished communities in Martissant and Belair as well as Cite Soleil. There was also serious damage to the Haitian National Police infrastructure. Some 77 police officers were killed, another 253 suffered severe injuries, another several hundred have not returned for unknown reasons. The National Police headquarters and some 45 stations and substations collapsed or suffered major damage along with numerous police vehicles. The rising numbers of kidnappings and sexual assaults, particularly in the camps, requires urgent remedial action. Perhaps most worrying is the possibility for serious social unrest as political movements take advantage of the very real hardships, frustrations and anxieties being endured by more than a million Haitians. Already demonstrations -- some with a threat of violence -- are taking place regularly in the capital and in a few other cities. All of these conditions could become aggravated in the event of floods and mudslides before emergency precautions can be taken.

It is clear that within the MINUSTAH structure, additional HNP are needed to support security needs. It also is clear that the HNP has to be supported to restart its fledgling reform program, including enabling the 22nd police recruiting class to begin its training at the police school. It also should be supported in completing the vetting process and in carrying out post quake investigations.

- The 99 members of the Haitian chamber of deputies and a third of their Senate ended their terms last Monday. The government consists of President Préval, his ministers and 19 members of the Haitian senate along with 140 mayoral councils and other local officials. The planned February 28 parliamentary election was postponed. Nearly 40 per cent of voting sites in the key departments had been destroyed in the quake and hundreds of thousands had lost their voting IDs, while others had fled to the country side. The Office of National Identification (ONI) had not updated the

basic civil registry since 2005. Since then, an unknown number of people turned 18, 500,000 have died, including 230,000 deaths in the quake, which also prompted 600,000 to flee the capital – all of which has created conditions that would tax even a well-functioning civil and voting registration bureaucracy. The current CEP, even though it has yet to actually manage an election since it was only named after the 2009 polls, had already been criticized by political opponents. A hard and fast path has to be blazed to get from here to presidential and legislative elections in November so that a new government can take office on 7 February 2011. For the least contentious process, the government needs to pursue more consensus with the opposing political party elites and other opponents, including some renewal of the CEP and its mandate. Those steps would underscore President Préval's commitment for November elections, a credible government in place next year, and political stability. It also will require immediate technical and financial support from the international community to every aspect of the process, moving quickly on the civil and voting registration process, political party support, widespread civic education, electoral observation and helping the CEP meet the major logistical challenges in the aftermath of the quake.

- Further, the IHRC, for which the enabling decree was not issued until 5 May, is not in place. The position for IHRC executive director was just posted and will not be closed until June 30 and there have not been final decisions on who will staff that agency or how it will work with the Haitian ministries. Over its proposed 18 month-operation, the IHRC needs not only to be flexible, lean and move projects faster than ever before, transparently and efficiently. It also has to be structured and managed so that it serves as a temporary building block to long-term strengthening of Haiti's government capacity – both in Port-au-Prince and around the island. Ideally ministry planning and policy units and perhaps the key initial implementers would be seconded to the IHRC to work side-by-side with international experts all of whom would return to their ministerial homes when this critical 18-month initial phase is complete. The IHRC also must reach out into the departments at least for reporting purposes if the decentralization process is going to be real.
- The government is still quite far away from filling the budget gap by 30 September, 2010. Initial evaluations in March by the government, IMF and other partners showed a budget gap of \$350 million. Revenue collection has been better than expected and the economy has been gradually rebounding, particularly in areas such as telecommunications, and there have been some reductions in spending plans, which have helped to reduce the gap to \$270 million. Budget support commitments currently total some \$95 million to date, which leaves a gap of some \$175 million. There is further promised funding of \$30 million in July from the World Bank. The U.S. could make a very strong statement of support for rebuilding Haiti's government and meeting critical needs if it were to contribute a significant amount to fill that budget gap—with appropriate safeguards. One way would be to agree with the Haitian government that a portion of that support would cover the costs of paying police salaries, including those of the incoming 22nd police recruitment class, and perhaps teachers and health professionals as well.

- The middle class -- from teachers to small business owners to government employees -- who have lost their homes may have been lost in the cracks until now. However, there is not yet a clear sense of how the recovery process will help these men and women jump-start new enterprises and cover their expenses.
- Meanwhile, the transitional camps are not fully in place. Some 7300 designated "most vulnerable" have been moved to Tabarre Issa and Corrail but that definition probably is too narrow. If the rains arrived in force this week, there would likely be others who would not only be inundated but at risk of being washed away. The numbers of the displaced change so frequently that it is impossible to substantiate a full registry of the displaced. The numbers have grown from 1.3 to 1.5 and most recently 1.7 million.
- Let me briefly describe some of the conditions in the camps we drove by and the several we walked through, including on night patrol with UN police. There is a glaring distinction between the extremely well-organized transitional shelter area where some of the most vulnerable have been moved and most of the other camps. In the new government/UN transitional space at Tabarre Issa, there is space between the rows of tents, a police presence and NGOs working to make life seem more normal. There was even including a group that films a soap opera in the camps during the day and screens it at night to the camp dwellers. On the other hand, there are also hundreds of disorganized, massive camps in Port-au-Prince where make-shift canvass and tarp tent-like shelters virtually sit on top of one another, such as the *Ancien Aéroport Militaire*, which I visited last week, and which hosts as many as 16,732 households, according to the shelter cluster camp site registry. On a five-per-household basis, this translates into 83,660 persons, over 80 per cent of the population of some of Haiti's Caribbean neighbors, in transplanted tent slums from nearby Cite Soleil and elsewhere. Another example is the Champs de Mars camp site, just outside the National Palace, where some 50,000 individuals of 10,312 households now live. A total of 138 of these camps are found in the capital, Port-au-Prince, and of these close to 60 per cent (79) function without a camp management agency.
- In too many, male and female latrines and showers set up side-by-side virtually invite sexual violence. There have been too many reports of rapes in camps since January. Yes, there were rapes and sexual violence in the nearby urban slums of Cite Soleil and other areas before the quake, but this does not excuse the current violence, especially since several of these camps are under international management. Due diligence is required to make it less likely for those unacceptable assaults to take place.
- In our last report, Crisis Group urged in our last report, following my trip to Haiti in March, that the UN Police and the HNP agree on a standard set of joint walking patrols through the camps and that a fixed joint police presence be established in the larger camps. The U.S. has obtained 38 tents and other facilities for that purpose. It is now four months after the quake and the tents have not yet been installed. And only now are the joint walking patrols beginning, but not everywhere and not on a schedule that permits checking and gives the residents a sense of security. HNP and

UN Police say they agree it needs to be done but full implementation remains to be seen. This month's scheduled arrival of a contingent of 110 female police officers from Bangladesh can significantly boost MINUSTAH efforts to support the Haitian National Police and the relief agencies managing the camps in that regard.

Finally, I would urge the committee to encourage the Administration to seek several measures to strengthen the MINUSTAH peacekeeping effort in an upcoming Security Council resolution:

1. Strengthen MINUSTAH's mandate by giving it primary responsibility for setting priorities with respect to integration of other UN agencies in the UN country team in order to better carry out its peacekeeping mandate. An early example would be to establish an integrated country team approach to the problem of sexual violence in the camps, coordinating available resources of UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNHCR, UNICEF and OCHA.
2. Ensure that the MINUSTAH mandate enables UNPOL on behalf and in close consultation with the HNP to guarantee security in the camps, particularly with respect to vulnerable women and children, and to support the resettlement of those at risk.
3. Extend the mission's mandate for two years.
4. Direct that MINUSTAH have available all necessary expert personnel to fulfil the election support role request by the Government of Haiti.
5. Support the Secretary General's call for an increase in the size of UNPOL during this critical period and seek additional Haitian diaspora with police experience to bolster its capacity.

Helping Haiti achieve its goal of recovery, reconstruction and refounding will place enormous demands on the U.S., the UN, the OAS and other members of the international community. Fulfilling those demands will enable Haiti to move past this disaster. Nothing less is acceptable.