The Use of Film to Challenge Non-Inclusive Narratives of Peacekeeping Successes in Haiti

It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti

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FILM


ABSTRACT

This article discusses the making of the film It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti (50 minutes 2018) - which was produced using participatory practices - and the project team’s use of the film to raise awareness of the need for reform of UN rules of engagement (ROE) and for an investigation into excessive use of force by the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) during the political transition years following the 2004 coup against former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, especially the years 2005, 2006 and 2007. The article also discusses the use of the film to challenge the exclusion, from the MINUSTAH success story narrative, of the stories of loss and grief of the people who live in the targeted community and to provide a platform to enable the experiences of survivors to be publicly acknowledged internationally.

KEY WORDS

Participatory film-making; story-telling in film to enable voices to be heard; United Nations peacekeeping in Haiti; film as a means of advocacy.

1 Introduction

This article discusses the making of the film It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti (50 minutes 2018) - which was produced using participatory practices - and the project team’s use of the film to raise awareness of the need for reform of UN rules of engagement (ROE) and for an investigation into excessive use of force by the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) during the political transition years following the 2004 coup against former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The article also discusses the use of the film to challenge the exclusion, from the MINUSTAH success story narrative, of the stories of loss and grief of the people who live in the targeted community and to provide a platform to enable the experiences of survivors to be publicly acknowledged internationally. The film project forms part of an emerging field of research work involving art practice used both as a healing tool, and as a method of enquiry useful both in academic research, and in legal and policy practice.5

4 The project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK.
There was no armed conflict as defined in international law in Haiti during the thirteen years that MINUSTAH was deployed.6 There was however a high degree of both state and gang violence.7 MINUSTAH took no action to curb violence by state authorities; but did succeed in reducing gang violence. However, because of the mission’s intense use of force in densely populated neighbourhoods many people were killed that had nothing to do with the gangs. In 2005, Jean-Marie Guehenno, who was then UN Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping, admitted, in a filmed interview and in reports seen by Amnesty International, that MINUSTAH had killed unarmed civilians during the course of its law enforcement operations in Cité Soleil that year.8 Amnesty International urged UN officials to make public the findings of its internal investigations, and to authorize that the deaths be ‘fully and impartially investigated’ and for ‘the results to be made public’ - but to date this has not happened.9 Some months after Guehenno’s acknowledgment that unarmed civilians had been killed by UN fire, Juan Gabriel Valdes, who was the UN Special Representative for Haiti and was also Head of the UN peacekeeping mission, announced that UN troops would soon ‘occupy’ Cité Soleil and ‘there'll be collateral damage but we have to impose our force, there is no other way.’10 Later that year Valdes’ successor, Edmond Mulet, admitted that Valdes’ predictions had been correct - UN peacekeepers had killed more unarmed people in 2006.11

Exact figures for deaths are impossible to obtain because there has been no public investigation, but reports from the US Embassy in Haiti and from a Port-au-Prince law firm, Bureau des Avocats Internationaux, suggest that more than sixty people were killed in the two largest operations alone, Operation Iron Fist on 6 July 2005 and Operation New Forest on 21/22nd December 2006 - and many more injured.12 Survivors of Operations Iron Fist and New Forest, interviewed for the film It Stays With You, claim that no one from the UN or from any state agency has ever visited their neighbourhood to speak to them; for Evelyn Myrtil ‘it’s as though you’re worthless.’13

Fund by an Innovation Award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK, It Stays With You forms part of an inter-disciplinary law and film studies research project and explores the role of participatory film as a method of addressing trauma in marginalized communities and as a means of highlighting the need for a human rights oriented approach to accountability in the conduct of UN law enforcement operations. The film, which won Best Director at the Belfast Respect Film Festival 2018

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9 Amnesty International Haiti / Dominican Republic: Deaths continue as MINUSTAH fails to protect civilians AMR 36/004/2006 16 January 2006; Amnesty International Fear for safety/Possible excessive use of force AMR 36/007/2006, 14 February 2006


13 Testimonies, It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti, supra n 1
and was selected by Professor Joseph Weiler as one of his ten best ‘reads/views’ in 2018,\(^\text{14}\) has been screened at more than twenty events in all five of the world’s continents. It was screened as a side event at the UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva, July 2018; at the Amnesty International’s Au Cinéma Pour Les Droits Humains, France, 2019, and the Tenemos Que Ver Festival Internacional de Cine y Derechos de Uruguay, 2019; and, in a shortened version, at the International Law Association biannual conference 2018, Sydney. Copies of the film were sent to UNDPKO and UNOLA and the project team has received confirmation from a number of sources, including UN DPKO, UNOLA and the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), that the film has been shared widely within the UN organization.\(^\text{15}\)

**Bois Neuf, copyright It Stays With You**

2. The *It Stays With You* Project’s Aims and Objectives

The project’s aim was to use participatory film practices to facilitate academic research in collaboration with survivors and also to use the film as a platform for advancing survivors’ claims for accountability and justice. Additionally, because film communicates at visceral and psychological levels that standard text based reports cannot usually achieve, the project aims to raise awareness within the UNDPKO, UNOLA and the UN Secretariat, of the traumatic effects of intense use of force by peacekeepers in urban neighbourhoods so that lessons can be learned for future practice.

Naomi Klein argues that one of the benefits that film brings to activist human rights research ‘has to do with the collective experience of watching film and the idea of a screening being a community meeting in a way…Your rage can be isolating. If you’re in a room with people, you can immediately turn and say “what do we do about it” and that’s the question.’\(^\text{16}\) The project team’s intention was to use the film *It Stays With You* to provide a public platform for Cité Soleil’s marginalised voices, to raise awareness, start a debate, and galvanize human rights organizations and activists to push for an inquiry.

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\(^{15}\) Project team documents and emails, on file with author.

\(^{16}\) Ezra Winton and Naomi Klein, ‘A Conversation with Naomi Klein’ in *Challenge for Change: Activist Documentary at the National Film board of Canada* ed.s Thomas Waugh, Michael Brendan Baker, Ezra Winton (Quebec, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), xviii
into the UN’s failure to investigate the scale of casualties and provide medical care, and for reform of UN peacekeeping rules on use of deadly force.

One of the project’s objectives was to produce a film, using participatory practices, that would enable survivors of MINUSTAH’s operations to tell their story, in their own words with as little mediation as possible, to the United Nations, international human rights organizations, local human rights organizations, academics, and other influential actors. As Jenny Edkins has observed, ‘trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors.’ Hitherto, most of the reporting on MINUSTAH’s operations has come from the mission itself, people working with the mission, political parties, the business sector and foreign embassies. For this reason, the film structure was designed with participants leading the way – their voices come first and occupy the major part of the film’s space.

The project team hoped that It Stays With You, by providing a platform in which survivors could speak directly to the UN, might modify the dominancy of the ‘resounding success’ narrative so as to bring the stories and experiences of the targeted community into the debates on use of deadly force in a policing context. The film attempts to do this by encouraging empathetic viewing and listening, which, as Stephanie Lehner argues, ‘allows for a listening and response to the pain and suffering of others in a way that previously was denied or seemed impossible.’

In addition the project team hoped that the film might also provide a counterweight to some of the savagery imagery that has featured in debates on Haiti, even in professional fora – as evidenced by the example of a 2007 report on Haiti by a subcommittee of the US Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, entitled U.N. Peacekeeping Forces: A Force Multiplier for the U.S.? , which stated that ‘without the United Nations’ presence, we would have witnessed an orgy of violence on that tragic island.’

3. The Film’s Context: MINUSTAH’s Operations to Control Gang Crime

MINUSTAH deployed to Haiti in June 2004 in the wake of the February coup against former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. MINUSTAH troop numbers varied year to year during MINUSTAH’s thirteen years of existence but in 2005 MINUSTAH comprised 7411 personnel (6013 of which were military) and by 2011, seven years after the coup, the mission was the third largest of the UN’s sixteen peacekeeping missions with 12,552 personnel deployed, 12.5% of UN peacekeeping personnel worldwide. MINUSTAH drew down in October 2017 and was replaced with the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), mandated to support the government to protect human rights. MINUJUSTH withdrew in October 2019 to be replaced with a new UN mission, the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), which will assist the Haitian government in ‘developing an inclusive approach with all segments of society to reduce intercommunal violence; ensuring compliance with international human rights obligations…and strengthening the justice sector.’

The armed violence associated with the coup against Aristide lasted just three weeks and involved no more than three hundred armed men. The International Crisis Group has concluded that

17 Jenny Edkins Trauma and the Memory of Politics (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2003) 4
22 S/RES 2476 (25 June 2019)
throughout the entire period of violence in Haiti in the twenty-first century there were no ‘clearly identified parties to a conflict’ and the situation ‘never escalated into an internal armed conflict.’  

Several ICRC reports, reflect a similar view. The Center on International Cooperation, in a case study cited by the UN Department of Peacekeeping (DPKO) in its own reports, also concludes that there was no armed conflict in Haiti.  

Part of the mandate for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti was adopted under Chapter VII. Resolution 1542 did not refer to ‘all necessary means’ but the authority to use force to carry out certain of the mission’s tasks was determined from the text of the resolution and associated UN documents. The mandate did not refer to armed conflict but noted ‘the existence of challenges to the political, social and economic stability of Haiti’. The Secretary-General’s report published the same month as S/RES 1542 was adopted, stated that ‘the greatest threat to security’ in Haiti came from ‘community-organized armed groups’ that were ‘highly fragmented, located primarily in impoverished urban areas’ and relied on ‘banditry and other criminal activities in order to sustain themselves’ as well as politically motivated intimidation which ‘now mainly targets Fanmi Lavalas supporters’. According to DPKO the ‘core of the problem’ in Haiti has been ‘policing.’ General Augusto Heleno Ribeiro Pereira, MINUSTAH’s force commander from June 2004 to August 2005, said that Haiti ‘was facing what was at root a police problem – criminal gangs had sunk their roots deep into a society beset by poverty.’ Siman and Santos note that there was no civil war and no parties to an armed conflict in Haiti, and therefore the focus of MINUSTAH’s military activities ‘easily came to include offensive actions against criminal gangs.’ Walter Dorn, who worked in intelligence for MINUSTAH, describes how in conducting operations against the gangs in Bois Neuf and other marginalized communities in Cité Soleil, MINUSTAH ‘deliberately sought to draw fire from the gangs…knowing that the gangsters’ pride would force them to retaliate, thus allowing the United Nations to return fire from relatively safe positions.’ Deliberately drawing fire in densely populated neighbourhoods creates a high risk of casualties, particularly because


27 S/RES 1542 30 April 2004  
28 Ibid  
29 Report of the Secretary-General on Haiti/2004/300, 16 April 2004 paragraph 23. Fanmi Lavalas is the political party founded by Aristide.  
31 E Aldunate, Backpacks Full of Hope: The UN Mission in Haiti, (Wilfrid Laurier University Press 2010), page 47  
MINUSTAH blockaded Cité Soleil’s exits for at least twenty-four hours after each of its operations ended. The largest operations took place between 2005 and 2007 in Cité Soleil, a densely populated city of less than eight square miles with a population, at the time, of between 200,000 and 300,000. 65% of the population in Haiti are children. Exact figures of casualties are impossible to obtain since the UN did not conduct any post-operation investigations in the city to ascertain the number of people killed and injured. However, several independent investigations by human rights groups, and by Harvard and Miami law schools, as well reports by the United States Institute for Peace and the Stimson Center, indicate that scores of people were killed, and many more injured, as a direct result of UN fire. Archive film footage taken by local reporters; memos sent by the US Embassy in Haiti; and interviews in our 2018 documentary It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti also indicate high levels of casualties.

4. The Film’s Subject Matter
It Stays With You focuses on the ‘collateral damage’ effects of the two largest of MINUSTAH’s militarized law enforcement operations, Operation Iron Fist on July 6 2005 and Operation New Forest on 21/22 December 2006. Both took place in Bois Neuf, a neighbourhood of fragile homes, some built of poor quality hollow breeze blocks but many built of salvaged scrap metal. MINUSTAH controlled all exits and entrances into Cité Soleil and prohibited anyone, including doctors and the Red Cross, from leaving or entering for between twenty-four and forty-eight hours after each UN operation had been completed. This prevented gangsters from leaving but it also meant that people could not escape the heavy onslaught of fire. Dr Armstrong Charlot, a surgeon based in Port-au-Prince, said that after each UN operation he was prevented from entering Cité Soleil to treat injured people (who had called

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35 Sakala http://www.sakala-haiti.org/cite-soleil; Helping Haiti https://www.helpinghaiti.ca/about/cite-soleil/
36 T M. Griffin and I P. Stotsky, Center for the Study of Human Rights, University of Miami, Haiti Human Rights Investigation, November 11-21 2004; Keeping the Peace in Haiti? An Assessment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti Using Compliance with its Prescribed Mandate as a Barometer for Success
T Griffin, UN in Haiti, Report for Lamp for Haiti, April 2007; UN in Haiti accused of second massacre http://haitiaction.net/News/HIP/1_21_7/1_21_7.html;
M L Mendonça, ‘UN Troops Accused of Human Rights Violations in Haiti’ Americas Program, CLP, January 21, 2008;
M Dziedzic and RM. Perito ‘Haiti Confronting the Gangs of Port-au-Prince’(n 73);
Guy Hammond ‘Saving Port-au-Prince: United Nations Efforts to Protect Civilians in Haiti in 2006–2007’ (n 74) pages 33 and 47;
37 K Yearman, Cité Soleil Massacre Declassification Project, which includes cable from US Embassy estimating about 20 women and children killed on 6 July 2005; “Haiti Post-Dread Wilme: MINUSTAH Takes off the Pressure.” Cable Number Port au Prince 001829 from US Embassy Port au Prince to US State Department Headquarters, https://www.cod.edu/people/faculty/yearman/cite_soleil.htm;
K Pina Haiti: We Must Kill the Bandits https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25Mf7LV5Qo8
38 It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti directed by Cahal McLaughlin and Siobhán Wills (52 minutes, 2018) www.istayswithyou.com/film
him by phone asking for help) for at least twenty-four hours because the UN had barricaded all entrances and did not permit anyone to enter. He said that there were, and still are, gangs in Cité Soleil, but that MINUSTAH did not distinguish between people carrying weapons and people who were not: ‘Let’s take children, three or four years old, what have they to do with gangs?’ He spoke of his extreme shock at the number of young children who were so badly injured they could not be saved, in particular a three-year old boy, whom he saw in his mother’s arms ‘with his guts hanging out’.42

In Operation Iron Fist, undertaken to arrest gang leader Dread Wilme, MINUSTAH reported that it fired 22,700 bullets, 78 grenades and 5 mortars, over a period of approximately seven hours.43 General Heleno stated on Haiti’s Radio Metropole, ‘We carried out an operation to show that the forces of order are powerful and that we have the means to impose the law... We will carry out operations, exert pressure, kill and arrest bandits.’ Reports by the United States Embassy in Haiti suggest that at least thirty people were killed.45 Seth Donnelly, who visited Bois Neuf twenty-four hours after Operation Iron Fist as part of a human rights delegation from the United States, reported that a number of dead were still lying in their homes, including a mother and child, and:

> We found homes, which when we say homes, we are talking basically shacks of wood and tin, in many cases, riddled with machine gun blasts as well as tank fire. The holes in a lot of these homes were too large just to be bullets. They must have been tank-type shells penetrating the homes. We saw a church and a school completely riddled with machine gun blasts.46

There was also graphic film footage shot by a journalist living in Cité Soleil, which MINUSTAH acknowledged that it had seen but dismissed as ‘lies’ without sending a team to the neighbourhood to investigate.48 Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operation, Jean-Marie Guehénno, publicly acknowledged, in filmed footage that is available on the UN’s own website, ‘I have to be honest with you, there may have been some civilian casualties’ but no one from the UN has visited the neighbourhood, then or at any time since, to talk to survivors and investigate what happened.49 Local lawyers and NGOs jointly filed two complaints to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.51 Amnesty International published two reports, the first urging UN officials to make public the results of their internal investigations52 and the second urging the UN to authorize an impartial investigation and for ‘the results to be made public’ – the UN did not respond publicly to either of these calls.

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40 Interview with Dr. Armstrong Charlot, at 33 Relief Clinic Hospital, Delmas, Port-au-Prince (29 Jan. 2018). Extracts in It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti supra n 1.
41 Ibid
42 Ibid
45 Cable U.S. Embassy Chargé d’Affaires 01/06/2006 http://www.ijdh.org/author/admin/page/93/
46 S Donnelly, ‘Eyewitnesses Describe Massacre by UN Troops in Haitian Slum,’ (n 77)
47 The journalist has since died but the footage has been used in Haiti: We Must Kill the Bandits (2009) produced and directed by Kevin Pina https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25Mf7Lv5Qo8
50 It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti (n 75) www.istayswithyou.com/film
51 Two Petitions to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights both titled Urgent Request for Provisional Measures Based on Grave Threats to the Lives of Civilians in Port-au-Prince, one against the Federative Republic of Brazil and the other against The United States of America, November 2005
52 Amnesty International Haiti / Dominican Republic: Deaths continue as MINUSTAH fails to protect civilians AMR 36/004/2006 16 January 2006
53 Amnesty International Fear for safety/Possible excessive use of force AMR 36/007/2006, 14 February 2006
Two months after Iron Fist, in the midst of an outcry over the scale of casualties incurred, General Heleno resigned. According to some reports Heleno was removed from office at the request of the UN. Yet no one from the UN went to the Cité Soleil neighbourhood to speak to survivors. Approximately six months later, on January 4th 2006, Heleno’s successor, General Bacellar, refused requests from the US Embassy in Haiti and Dr Reginald Boullos, President of the Haitian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to conduct an operation similar to Iron Fist because too many people would be killed: he said that his job was to defend the Haitian constitution not to fight crime. However, two days later MINUSTAH’s civilian head of mission, Juan Gabriel Valdès, insisted that UN troops would soon ‘occupy’ Cité Soleil: ‘I think there’ll be collateral damage but we have to impose our force, there is no other way.’ The following morning General Bacellar was found dead in his underpants on the balcony of his hotel room: apparently he had shot himself. Bacellar’s deputy, Eduardo Aldunate, who subsequently took over as interim force commander, reported that ‘the press exaggerated the danger on the streets’ and we ‘were under heavy pressure’ including from a ‘top official of an important country’ to go into Cité Soleil and clean up the gangs but we ‘knew that civilians would take more casualties than the gangs if we did this.’

Following Bacellar’s death there was a pause in large scale military operations until almost the end of the year. But between December 2006 and March 2007 MINUSTAH carried out 15 heavily militarized operations in Cité Soleil. In Operation New Forest, which the UN said was undertaken ‘to fight crime and insecurity,’ MINUSTAH fired 10,000 bullets on the night of the 21st/22nd December. The Bureau des Avocats Internationaux documented 31 people killed in the operation, among them children and the elderly, 33 wounded and 238 people displaced. The president of the Haitian Senate’s Human Rights Commission described the operation as ‘a crime against humanity.’ MINUSTAH’s civilian head of mission, Edmond Mulet, stated ‘there has been collateral damage definitely’ – yet so far as can be ascertained no one from the UN, or from the Haitian government, visited the neighborhood.

54 Six months prior to Operation Iron Fist, the Brazilian Bar Association sent a team to Haiti to investigate following an outcry over casualties. Their report to Brazil’s Congress in December 2004 strongly criticized General Heleno, who explained that MINUSTAH was ‘under extreme pressure’ from the United States, Canada and France ‘to use violence’ in Cité Soleil; A Bussinger Carvalho, Member of the Human Rights Commission of the Federal Organization of Advocates in Brazil and Official representative on their Human Rights Missions in Haiti in 2005 and 2007, Interview with Siobhán Wills, 27 November 2019
56 P Davison, ‘UN’s chief peacekeeper is found dead in Haiti hotel,’ Independent, 9 January 2006
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/jan/21/haiti-wikileaks;
58 P Davison, ‘UN’s chief peacekeeper is found dead in Haiti hotel,’ (n 94)
59 E Aldunate, Backpacks Full of Hope: The UN Mission in Haiti (Wilfrid Laurier University Press 2010), page 143
60 ‘Clarification on the joint PNH/MINUSTAH operation in Cité Soleil Port-au-Prince’ UN statement by Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire (DCPJ) at 250-3630 and MINUSTAH (Je Wè Bouch Pale) at 244-3503 Dec. 26, 2006 http://www.ijdh.org/2006/12/archive/institute-for-justice-democracy-in-haiti-home-437/
62 Andrew Buncombe, ‘Civilians caught in crossfire during Port-au-Prince raids’ supra n 7.
63 Dr. Armstrong Charlot, interview with Siobhán Wills at 33 Relief Clinic Hospital, Delmas, Port-au-Prince, 29 January 2018; The Red Cross said UN troops ‘blocked Red Cross vehicles from entering Cité Soleil’, Y Engler, ‘The Haiti Occupation Continues,’ Counterpunch, 7 Feb. 2014, https://www.counterpunch.org/2014/02/07/thehaiti-occupation-continues/
64 ‘Half-Hour for Haiti: Tell The Times to Tell the Whole Story,’ supra n 7.
after this, or after any of the other operations during this period, to investigate the number of casualties and whether there was a need for medical care. Several survivors said that they tried to report the deaths of their family members but were repeatedly turned away.

Many of the wounds inflicted were too severe to have been caused by the kind of weapons owned by Haitians and could only have been caused by fire from MINUSTAH. Survivors say that several children and a pregnant woman were killed in their beds by bullets coming through the roofs. The bullet holes have been repaired but are still clearly visible today. John Carroll, a US based doctor who works with Medecins Sans Frontières, said he spoke with the family who ‘said the helicopter fired down on Cité Soleil for 3 hours. I saw the holes in the roof and the holes in the people.’ He also said ‘I went to St. Catherine's Hospital in Cite Soleil…I examined the patients myself and their stories seemed to correspond with their injuries.’ Cité Soleil’s only public hospital was ‘blasted by a bullet from a 20-millimeter cannon, a weapon that is mounted on the Jordanian tanks but is not used by the local armed groups.’ Survivors say that in both operations houses were ‘bent’ and totally destroyed by ‘things coming through the roof’ and that other homes were razed to the ground by ‘balls of fire’ in which one child burned to death. Sisters Modeleine and Diorlie Dorcius, who were teenagers when their father was killed in his pottery workshop by a MINUSTAH bullet so large that his guts were splattered all over the roof of the workshop, said ‘we had to clean it up…this is so extreme, it’s something we can’t understand.’ As residents pointed out, this type and scale of damage could only have been caused by helicopter fire or by large cannon guns mounted on armoured vehicles and ‘Haitians don’t have helicopters’ or cannon guns. At the time MINUSTAH insisted that they only killed in self-defence and that they did not fire from helicopters. However General Heleno, MINUSTAH’s force commander from June 2004 to August 2005 and now Brazil’s Minister for Security, stated, in a 2018 television debate, that MINUSTAH’s ROE were ‘very flexible’ and permitted targeted killing including by firing from helicopters. He added that one of the factors contributed to MINUSTAH’s success was that UN troops had the ‘protection’ of immunity from prosecution: he said that Brazilian troops needs similar ROE and similar immunities from criminal prosecution in order to successfully control gang violence in Brazil.

65 Survivors’ testimonies in *It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti* (n 75) available at www.itstayswithyou.com/film
66 Survivors’ testimonies in *It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti* (n 75) available at www.itstayswithyou.com/film
68 Seen by Siobhán Wills on visits to Bois Neuf, Cité Soleil in 2016 - 2018.
71 Testimonies in *It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti*, supra n 1.
72 Ibid
74 General Heleno, speaking on GloboNews, 17 February 2018 https://globoatplay.globocom/globonews/v/6512023/ Translation Julia Forlani
75 Ibid
4. The Making of *It Stays With You* using Participatory Practices

*It Stays With You* was produced in Haiti, which is over 4000 miles from Ireland, where the project team is based. The project team does not speak Creole and the Cité Soleil participants in the project do not speak English. The survivors that participated in the film live in one-room houses, many of which are built of salvaged metal, wood and cloth. Many adults have no access to a latrine (there is one in the primary school) and there is no sewage system, no garbage collection system, and no clean water. Residents have to buy all the water they drink, most of which is delivered by truck in little plastic sachets as these are cheaper than bottled water. Undeniably, the Irish research team enjoys a much larger share of the world’s wealth and resources than the Haitian participants in the project and therefore Irish researchers making a film in Haiti risk replicating (and thereby contributing to further entrenching) colonial patterns of structural inequality, including through the unequal balance of power in our working relationships. This presented a major challenge, which the team strove to mitigate through collaboration, transparency, and participatory practices.

The project team was fortunate in engaging Myrlene Dominique as their interpreter. She worked for five years running a health centre in the Bois Neuf neighbourhood of Cité Soleil and so she knew most people in the community, and had particularly close relationships with the women because of the health needs of their children. Since the two largest operations, Iron Fist and New Forest, took place in Bois Neuf and Myrlene was trusted by the residents there, Bois Neuf became the focus of the film. However, in order to ensure that the translation of survivors’ stories was accurate as possible, we also employed a translator in addition to our interpreter – so that all the survivors’ stories were translated twice, providing a second check on the accuracy, and providing also for some discussion on the ‘truest’ translation in the context of what the speaker was saying. Myrlene was the project’s main contact with the community, but we also worked with a number of other English speaking Haitians based in Cité Soleil, including a journalist with Haiti Liberté and the founder and director of Sakala, Daniel Tillias, who was born in Cite Soleil and founded the youth centre in 2004, to encourage the rival violent groups of Cite Soleil ‘to find a peaceful path to live together through playing soccer’ and later also through dance (for those uninterested in soccer) and a vegetable garden.  

Myrlene organized a meeting in October 2016 between the project team and Bois Neuf community leaders, and subsequently with the wider Bois Neuf community. The project team was asked whether we could ‘bring justice’ and in order to minimize the possibility of raising unrealistic expectations we spent a considerable amount of time explaining our position and resources and why we could not. However, the team explained that the film could provide survivors with a public platform through which they could tell their stories, in the way they wanted to and that they would have control over their contribution. The project team would use the film to push for an inquiry, but that they could not promise that this would lead to ‘justice.’ The project team committed to sending the film to the UN Department of Peacekeeping and other sectors of the UN and that we would continue to follow up with the UN on their behalf. The team also committed to bringing the participants’ stories to the attention of people with influence including the international human rights, military and academic experts, politicians that have an interest in human rights issues, and others such as writers and artists.

In the days following the community meeting in Bois Neuf a number of people came to the project team to volunteer their stories and discuss participation in the project. Filming took place during

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77 Myrlene organized a similar meeting with community leaders of neighbouring Project Drouillard who told the project team that since they could not promise them justice they did not want to become involved because the process itself would raise expectations and painful memories; but they invited the project team to make a different film about the work they were doing in cleaning streets and providing services to the community (the streets did look very clean and the social community house looked popular and well maintained). Unfortunately, the project team did not have the funding to make that film.
three visits over the next nine months. Two-thirds of the film is comprised of survivors’ testimonies. In addition to these there are also interviews with witnesses, lawyers based in Port-au-Prince, two former UN Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and two professors from the departments of ethnography and political science at the State University of Haiti. But other than these, the film provides very little discussion of the political and social background pertaining in Haiti at the time. This is because the film was intended to provide a platform for the survivors to tell their stories in their own way and the project team believed that it would not have been appropriate to present the participants’ testimonies through the lens of the project team’s interpretation of a highly contested political context - since this would constitute an over-mediated intervention on the survivors’ telling of their own stories. As one reviewer of the film observed:

    aside from the opening titles, there is very little in the way of contextual set up - this film is about what happened…One Haitian after another gives detailed descriptions of the extremity of the raid…The effect, particularly in this first section, is striking. As a testimonial, one of the best decisions the filmmakers have made is to let these residents speak for themselves, often looking directly into the camera...There is an immediacy to their stories that needs no burnishing by extra-narrative.78

In selecting the film’s cut-away shots79, which would complement the interviews and provide important visual narrative threads, the project team was careful to choose pictures that would draw the audience closer and reflect the lives of the participants – for example children singing and studying their lessons in school - rather than images that might be potentially alienating for both the participants and viewers, for example rivers choked with unsightly plastic and rubbish because there is no garbage collection in Cité Soleil. Choosing to avoid alienating imagery e.g. of sewage, rubbish and pigs, and instead using images that reflect the common cultural bonds between the residents of Cite Soleil and the film-makers —children going to school and college, doing homework, adults going to work, cooking, washing —was a conscious choice aimed at honing in on the universality of human rights and of the human desires and needs that transcend culture differences.

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78 Aaron Hunter ‘It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti’ Pluralities Vol. 1 Issue 2 https://www.pluralities.org/volume-one#/01/02/
79 Cutaways are also known as B-Roll in filmmaking.
Prior to the first public screening the participants watched the film in a private screening in a local primary school before giving their consent to the film being shown publicly. They were all happy with their own contributions, but some of the older women had difficulty following what the English-speaking experts were saying, even though there were subtitles. It was explained that some of the participants could not read, so, in response, the project team arranged for the English language interviews to be dubbed into Creole so that all the participants could understand, regardless of their literacy skills.

*It Stays With You* premiered in FOKAL, the Soros Foundation funded cultural centre in Port-au-Prince, to a full house of 120 people. The film was also screened at the State University of Haiti. The survivors attended both screenings and chose one of their group, Evelyne Myrtil, to represent them on the Q and A panels, and they also contributed to the discussions from the floor.

In January 2018, the project team returned to Bois Neuf to update participants on responses to the film screenings elsewhere and their efforts to draw the attention of the UN to the participants’ testimonies. In the project team’s view, it was important to physically return to Bois Neuf to update participants because residents of that community do not have access to the internet and cannot receive phone calls from abroad because the project team does not speak Creole and the participants’ mobile phone plans do not facilitate receiving international calls. An interview with Dr Charlot and other material recorded during this visit were edited into the film in spring 2018 and a new version was prepared for screening as a side event at the July 2018 Human Rights Council session in Geneva.

### 5. Providing a Platform for Survivors to Tell their Stories

The film is the project team’s attempt to provide meaning to the experiences of those who suffered the consequences of MINUSTAH’s raids and who feel marginalised by their consequences; as one

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80 [https://itstayswithyou.com/screenings/](https://itstayswithyou.com/screenings/)
participant Saurel Eliasse said, ‘There is no state agency here that deals with this’. For Claire Hackett and Bill Rolston ‘there is no easily available blueprint that can indicate the best way in which to realise the potential benefits of storytelling in transitional societies’ but it is accepted within the field of trauma studies that storytelling - and documentary filmmaking is a form of storytelling - has the potential to return a degree of agency, a sense of dignity, and act as a vehicle of reparation, for the survivor.

For Professor Aoife Nolan, who saw the film at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin and spoke on the post-screening panel, ‘the participatory methodology used in making the film is absolutely crucial and it provides such a sharp contrast to what we hear about the denial of voice, the denial of agency and the denial of justice experienced by victims of the violence’. The possibilities and limitations of using participatory practices in a film production and dissemination have taught the project team many lessons. On the one hand, the unequal resources that the participants and the filmmakers had access to, including travel, equipment, communication, and finance, limited how ‘shared’ the experience could be. On the other hand, the participants were engaged in a process that respected their co-ownership of the stories. They watched the film before it was shown publicly in order to ensure they were happy with the way their stories are presented. The project team was unable to raise funds for the participants to attend all screenings, but they were all present, with some sitting on the post-screening discussion panels, at the premiere in the FOKAL cultural centre and the State University of Haiti event, both in Port-au-Prince.

Chris van Der Merwe and Pumla Godobo-Madikizela claim, ‘Narrating one’s life is about finding structure, coherence and meaning in life. Trauma, in contrast, is about the shattering of life’s narrative structure, about a loss of meaning – the traumatised person has lost the plot.’ Graham Dawson argues that through the public nature of storytelling, the work of campaigning:

- being centrally concerned with telling and listening to stories, seeking and bestowing social recognition and widening the circle of memory, provides in itself a vehicle of reparation and the integration of the traumatic past, for both the individual psyche and the traumatised community.

All of the film’s participants said that being able to tell their story on a public platform through participating in the film, through watching themselves on the ‘big screen’ and being asked to talk about it publicly, has helped them cope with their anger at the UN for treating them ‘as though you’re worthless’.

One of the reasons people were keen to be involved in the film was because they said that this was the first time anyone had shown any interest in what happened to them. Evelyne Myrtil, whose three children were shot by fire from a UN helicopter whilst asleep in their home, said, ‘(a)fter everything that happened there is no-one to come and talk to you, you’re worth nothing.’ Saurel Eliasse, whose brother was shot in the eye by a large bullet fired from a heavy gun mounted on a UN

81 Testimony in It Stays With You supra n 1.
83 Psychoanalyst Renos Papadopolous suggests, ‘The healing effect of storytelling, in its multiple variations, has always been a well-known phenomenon.’ Transcultural Care: A Guide for Health Care Professionals (Salisbury, Quay Books, 1998) 472
84 https://itstayswithyou.com/screenings
86 Graham Dawson, Making Peace with the Past: Memory, Trauma, and the Irish Troubles. (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007) 177
87 Testimonies in It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti, supra n 1.
88 Ibid
armoured vehicle and is no longer able to work, said ‘A massacre takes place but no-one comes to see how many victims there are, how many people were lost, how many cases there are. You know what you know, it stays with you.’

According to the project team’s interpreter ‘nobody had ever cared enough’ to come and ask the residents of Bois Neuf about their experiences:

not even our government, not even a police officer, no one ever asked them their feelings and how they felt about...not even us Haitians, not even if we work in Bois Neuf, which I’ve worked in Bois Neuf for five years, I’ve never asked them about what happened. It was just really a closed situation that nobody speaks about. You coming all the way from Ireland really care enough to ask them about that, I think that psychologically they feel like it’s a relief.

This sense of a closed situation was also something identified by the Ardoyne Commemoration Project Committee in Ardoyne: The Untold Truth, which tells the stories of 99 people from the community of Ardoyne who became victims of the political violence in north Belfast between 1969 and 1998. The authors note that:

in the trauma and confusion of the time people often did not have the space to reflect upon and fully analyse the context of the killings… the community had no option but to ‘get on with things.’ …for almost all, the lack of space to grieve (at either an individual or collective level) was one of the most difficult issues of all.

In their report to the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, the Ardoyne Commemoration Project quote one respondent who thought that public acknowledgment of the community’s stories might ‘help end a feeling of isolation that people would have and it lent credibility to what they were saying.’ The Bois Neuf residents who shared their stories in It Stays With You said participation in the project was a positive experience because they were able to tell their stories to someone outside their own community for the first time. Jean Victor said ‘It’s the first time someone has come by to look at us…It makes me happy.’ Pierre Louis said that he ‘feels taller. I don’t know if I have grown taller but I feel taller.’ Edren, whose ten-year old daughter Vanne was shot in bed, said ‘It’s the first time since it happened that someone has come to talk to us about it.’ He showed the project team the bullet holes in the roof of his house in which he and his daughter were shot. He said ‘I think that thanks to the strangers’ mission and what they do I have the opportunity to be heard.

6. Survivors’ three-minute individual filmed testimonies and the project website
During their return to Haiti in January 2018, as a complement to the film, which tells their collective story, the project team offered the survivors the opportunity to make their own individual short films, on subjects they chose that were relevant to the project, aided by two young local filmmakers. The project team discussed with the participants what themes they might choose for their individual film, e.g. perhaps to make a digital memorial to their lost ones, or to address the UN, and unanimously they decided on the latter. Each went to a different room and recorded, spontaneously and with the help of

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89 Ibid
90 https://itstayswithyou.com/making/
91 Ardoyne Commemoration Memorial Project Committee, Ardoyne: The Untold Truth (Belfast, BTP Publications, 2005), 527 and 530
93 Testimonies in It Stays With You: Use of Force by UN Peacekeepers in Haiti, supra n 1.
94 Ibid
95 Ibid
96 https://itstayswithyou.com/updates/
the young local filmmakers, a direct, to-camera address to the UN, explaining their situation and demanding a response. Edren Elisma explained his decision to speak directly to the UN saying ‘Deep down they know we’re not lying.’ The local filmmakers later edited and translated these for use on the website. This collection of individual three-minute filmed testimonies was sent to the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Jean-Pierre Lacroix, but the project team report that no response has been provided to date.

In addition to being sent to the UN, the participants’ individual films were also uploaded to the project’s website. This website complements the film and facilitates making available information that expands the possibilities of encouraging engagement. While the film has a visceral quality, as described by Klein, it also has the limitation of being transitory, i.e. one tends to view a film just once. Online dissemination has become more accessible and commonplace, as well as more permanent. The website provides documentation that contextualizes the legal issues, a trailer that provides a taster to the film, some post-screening panel discussions that were filmed, and reviews that engage with many of the issues raised in both the film and its production.

7. Campaign to Secure an Investigation

It Stays With You has been screened, along with expert panel debates at universities—including the United Nations University in Tokyo 2017 and at the International Law Association biannual conference in Sydney 2018—and at human film rights festivals in Uruguay, France and Ireland, as well as the Caribbean Tales Film Festival in Toronto. Alongside these screenings the project team has conducted a social media campaign and written articles for The Conversation as well as academic articles. The project team sent the film to the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and to the UN Office of Legal Affairs and the UN Department of peacekeeping. Maud Fournier, who heads the Haiti desk of UNHCR, confirmed to the project team in June 2018 that the film had been shared widely within the UN organization—that she had in fact seen the film before it was sent to her. She also told the team that, in response to the film, UNDPKO had requested a search of all the documents relating to MINUSTAH’s operations during this period wherever held.

A week prior to the screening of the film as a side event at the Human Rights Council session on July 3rd 2018, Jean Pierre Lacroix sent the project team an email ‘Please be assured that the United Nations is closely examining this matter, and we will provide a reply as soon as possible’; but he has still not provided a reply—and he has not responded to the project team’s follow up inquiries or to the individual filmed testimonies sent to him by survivors. Even the most basic request—to send a team of human rights officers from the UN’s military base in Port-au-Prince to meet with survivors in their neighbourhood of Bois Neuf (a couple of hours down the road from the UN base) to hear their stories and view the bullet holes in their roofs—has not been met.

During the January 2018 visit to Haiti to update participants from Bois Neuf on the progress of the film, the project team visited Guiseppe Calandruccio, human rights protection officer with the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), at his office in Camp Delta, Port-au-Prince, to

97 Jeanty Junior Augustin and Pierre Moise
98 https://itstayswithyou.com/updates/
99 Documents on file with author.
100 https://itstayswithyou.com
101 Documents on file with author.
102 Ibid
103 Email to project team from Jean-Pierre Lacroix 25 June 2018, on file with author.
104 Confirmed to author June 10th 2019
105 MINUSTAH drew down in October 2017 and was replaced by a smaller mission the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) mandated to assist the Government of Haiti to further develop the Haitian
discuss the survivors’ claims. The project team then paid for a driver and van to bring some of the survivors to Camp Delta where they gave their testimonies to a Creole speaking officer. Calandruccio said he would arrange for his officers to visit the Bois Neuf neighbourhood so that the survivors could show the officers the bullet holes, the damaged houses, and demonstrate what happened. But this has not happened: no one from MINUJUSTH or any other UN unit has visited Bois Neuf. Calandruccio told the project team in November 2018 that MINUJUSTH is no longer able to engage with meeting the survivors and that they should pursue their case at UN headquarters in New York, since there is nothing he can do. The fact that MINUJUSTH has not been able to follow up on the testimonies by visiting the neighbourhood and hearing the survivors’ stories in situ, is disrespectful to them, particularly since the process of giving their testimonies to UN representatives raises survivors’ expectations that the UN will at least investigate their claims.

8. Challenging MINUSTAH’s ‘Success Story’ Narrative in Haiti and Internationally
In addition to the two screenings in Port-au-Prince It Stays With You has been screened in various other locations in Haiti, including at ‘a philosophy café’ in Miragoaans run by Professor Camille Chalmers and Dr Lynn Selby of the State University of Haiti. Dr Michelle Morse, Instructor in Medicine at Harvard Medical School and Co-Founding Director of the NGO Equal Health, showed the film to students on a three-week long social medicine course in Haiti. She reported that there were 23 health professional students (nursing social work and medicine), half from Haiti and half from the USA, one from Mexico, Rwanda, Burundi, Cameron and the Comoros islands. The team of four faculty members also watched, in addition to two Equal Health staff members. ‘We were blown away. Many of the Haitian students did not know about the events described in the film.’ She said that students and staff were outraged especially as ‘the new UN envoy was just in Haiti saying that MINUSTAH was a success.’

By providing a platform through which the participants could tell their stories to a world outside their community the film is contributing to sharing of survivors’ similar experiences of UN operations in other marginalized communities in Port-au-Prince. For example, Haitian author Edwidge Danticat wrote to the project team, ‘When I saw the people say that no one had come to speak to them before, it reminded me so much of my own family members’ experiences in Bel Air. Thank you so much for helping these folks tell their stories.’ She included a link to the film in her article ‘A New Chapter for the Disastrous United Nations Mission in Haiti’ in the New Yorker. At a screening in Bordeaux a member of the audience spoke from the floor to say that his family had experienced similar violence from UN peacekeepers in Cote d’Ivoire.

The project team has learned lessons in terms of harnessing the visceral impact of the film to drive forward debate internationally on reform of UN rules of engagement and accountability processes. Naomi Klein, speaking of her use of film to support her written work, has said that:

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106 Email to project team from Guiseppe Calandruccio, 4 November 2018, on file with author.
107 Email to project team from Dr Michelle Morse, MD, MPH Founding Co-Director, EqualHealth, Assistant Program Director, Brigham and Women’s Internal Medicine Residency Instructor in Medicine, Harvard Medical School Sunday 13 August 2017, on file with author.
108 Ibid
109 Email to project team 31 October 2017, on file with author.
111 Screening of It Stays With You, Sciences Po Bordeaux, Amphithéâtre Etienne de la Boétie, 18 March, 5.30 pm
I originally thought that I would just use the film at the start of my presentations and I found that went really badly because I couldn’t follow the emotional impact of the short [film] because people were stunned by it. And then just listening to someone talk was anticlimactic.\textsuperscript{112}

Naomi Klein decided as a result to screen the film after her talks rather than before. The team found that the intensity of the emotions people felt after watching \textit{It Stays With You} had a similar effect: at the end of the screening people seemed stunned. In most cases the silence was then broken by the panel chair (usually an academic) slightly awkwardly trying to move on to familiar ground by opening a debate on the relevant legal issues. It was only afterwards in the social gatherings that people talked about the effect the film had on them personally. This meant that in some of the earlier screenings the value of the collective experience of the event was limited to the shared experience of watching the film, which was strong, but not as strong as it might have been if the shared experience of watching the film had then moved into something akin to ‘the beginning of a community meeting’.\textsuperscript{113}

The experience was noticeably different at the Harvard screening. The organisers, Harvard’s Equal Health, Center for Global Health, and Social Medicine Consortium, arranged for a ‘Moment of Reflection’ to immediately follow the film. This was led by Nadia Raymond (who is Haitian) from the Social Medicine Consortium. Nadia’s harnessing of the intense emotions in the room—which were present at every screening but were often left hanging when it seemed almost too personal to engage—enabled the audience to share not only their views but their feelings. Only then was it possible to draw from the audience suggestions as to ‘what can we do about it?’. The Moment of Reflection provided a very powerful transition from the film to the panel debate and generated something akin to the spirit of a ‘community meeting’ that Klein has spoken about. This meant that when the event moved on to the panel debate that ‘community meeting’ spirit lasted into the discussions and gave them a sense of shared engagement.

A slightly different approach led to a similar engagement in Toronto at the Caribbean Tales Film Festival in 2018. The film was one of three shown on ‘Haiti Night’ that attracted an audience of over 200 diaspora Haitians and others from the Caribbean\textsuperscript{114}. As the panel gathered for the after screenings discussion, a pause allowed the audience to gather their thoughts and emotions, so that an engaged debate followed, ranging from the injustices perpetrated by MINUSTAH to the contemporary political situation in Haiti.

\textbf{9. Conclusion}

When MINUSTAH drew down in October 2017, Sandra Honoré, Special Representative for Haiti and Head of the MINUSTAH Mission from 2013 to 2017, praised the work of MINUSTAH saying that ‘Haiti is now in a position to move forward and consolidate the stability that has been obtained, as a framework for continued social and economic development.’\textsuperscript{115} But Frank Muller and Andrea Steinke, who conducted field-work in the marginalized communities of Cité Soleil, Bel Air and Fort National in

\textsuperscript{112} Ezra Winton and Naomi Klein, ‘A Conversation with Naomi Klein’, supra n 16, xxiii

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid, xviii

\textsuperscript{114} https://caribbeantalesfestival.com/2018-torchsong-haiti/

\textsuperscript{115} UN Envoy ‘INTERVIEW: Haiti on path to stability, development thanks to UN mission, says envoy’ https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/interview-haiti-path-to-stability-development-thanks-to-un-mission-says-envoy
2015 and 2016, report that ‘the violence’ of MINUSTAH’s interventions and ‘the number of victims are burnt deep into the collective memory.’

The *It Stays With You* project cannot heal grief nor restore the loss of education and culture. While expectations were managed in the first pre-production meetings, nonetheless it has been very disappointing to both participants and filmmakers that the UN failed to hold even the most basic inquiry by visiting the survivors in their homes. Nevertheless, bearing in mind Richard Mollica’s claim that, ‘when survivors begin to tell their stories, they are struggling to create something whole from the physical and psychological destruction that has happened to them’, arguably the film and the website create a space where survivors demand and receive international public acknowledgement of their experiences and therefore challenge the isolation that the violence and the marginalisation enacted by the UN has forced upon them. The project team’s interpreter Myrlene Dominique said that when the participants saw themselves ‘on the big screen’ they felt excited because now everyone who sees the film:

will know what they went through…and how they came out strong due to the fact that they showed you that they are still living and…although they cannot see the ministers face to face they could finally tell them this how we felt when you came into our neighbourhood, you came our town and our city and destroyed things in our city, destroy our family, take away our family, take away a person, a life, take away a eye, take away something from our family, what you did to us. That screen, seeing their- self, giving them a sense of relief…It was a very sad moment but it was also a very happy moment due to the fact that [they felt] a sense of life.

Participatory film is one of a number of ways in which art projects can engage in human rights research and human rights advocacy in collaboration with survivors - so that they can exercise agency and control over how their stories are used. Film can serve as record of what happened and so challenge resolution and recovery narratives that exclude survivors’ voices. Film may not always be successful in securing justice and reparations for harms done, but it can raise public awareness of those accountability gaps and through survivor empowerment can contribute to the rebuilding of communities.

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116 Transnationales Peacebuilding als Süd-Süd- Kooperation: Brasiliens MINUSTAH-Engagement in Haiti’ funded by the German Foundation for Peace Research (DSF) with additional funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 337974 – SECURCIT).

117 Frank Müller and Andrea Steinke, ‘Criminalising encounters: MINUSTAH as a laboratory for armed humanitarian pacification’ (2018) 19 Global Crime 3-4, 228-249, at 239


119 https://itstayswithyou.com/making