

# Cooperation, information, and keeping the peace: Civilian engagement with peacekeepers in Haiti

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## Abstract

Cultivating cooperation with local populations is necessary for peacekeeping operations to effectively prevent and reduce violence. To accomplish their missions in complex foreign theaters of operation, peacekeepers must solicit information about local political actors, social networks, and violence. Under what conditions do local populations cooperate with United Nations peacekeepers? How does exposure to peacekeeping security activities, relief activities, or abuse – three of the primary ways that local communities experience peacekeepers – affect the likelihood that individuals cooperate with peacekeepers by providing information to them? Using an original survey of a random sample of residents of metropolitan Port-au-Prince, Haiti, we show that people who are exposed to security and relief activities by the United Nations peacekeeping operation, MINUSTAH, have more positive opinions of how effective they are, and are more willing to cooperate with peacekeepers by providing them with information. On the other hand, exposure to abuse dramatically undermines civilian opinions of how effective, benevolent, and abusive peacekeepers are but has a smaller effect on cooperation. These findings present an opportunity and challenge for peacekeepers: if public opinion and cooperation are responsive to peacekeeper policy, then peacekeepers must deliver services and prevent abuse in order to solicit the cooperation that is necessary for mission success.

## Introduction

Peacekeeping operations (PKOs) are a key tool used by the international community to maintain security in countries plagued by violence. Between 1948 and 2015, 71 United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations were deployed (Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2016). Deployments face many obstacles in altering the underlying dynamics of conflict and establishing avenues for domestic actors to pursue peaceful transitions. One core challenge to PKOs, and foreign military operations more broadly, is eliciting cooperation from civilians. To operate effectively in foreign environments, militaries require contextual information, including political actors, social cleavages, and incidents of violence. While a growing consensus in the policy world holds that cooperative relationships with civilians is key

to PKO success, many deployments remain deeply unpopular with populations who view them as impotent or abusive (Johnstone, 2006).

The UN has shifted the focus of PKOs over the past two decades to emphasize community cooperation. While first-generation missions emphasized military efforts and elite-level mediation, second-generation multidimensional missions deliver a basket of services that build peace from the bottom up (Goulding, 1993; Fortna, 2008). To do so, peacekeepers engage in a range of activities, all of which rely on community cooperation. The provision of security, for instance, depends on obtaining information from local populations to monitor

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and respond to threats. Civic education programs, institution building, and economic revitalization also require participation and confidence from various sectors of society. As peacekeepers increasingly engage communities through multidimensional programming, civilian cooperation has become paramount.

Despite the growing commitment to civilian engagement, little is known about the conditions under which civilians cooperate with peacekeepers and how peacekeepers can generate cooperation. In this article, we examine how everyday experiences with peacekeepers engaging in security efforts, relief services, or abusive behavior affect the likelihood that civilians will share information with them. We argue that the incentives of peacekeepers and local populations are often aligned – peacekeepers provide security and relief services that civilians desire – but barriers to cooperation persist for three reasons. First, there may be uncertainty around peacekeepers' true interests. Second, individuals may doubt whether peacekeepers can effectively deliver services. Both of these would reduce incentives to cooperate. Third, individuals may fear abuse by undisciplined peacekeepers. Ultimately, civilians make decisions about cooperation without full information about the capabilities and intentions of peacekeepers. As such, individual experiences with peacekeepers shape their personal experiences and inform their decisions about cooperation.

In light of these barriers, we assess how exposure to peacekeeping activities shapes individual willingness to share information with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We marshal data from an original household survey of 585 respondents in which we used satellite imagery to draw a random sample and measure the beliefs and behavior of the population that UN peacekeepers aim to serve. With these data, we test two sets of hypotheses. First, we examine whether Haitians' experiences with peacekeepers are related to their assessments of the costs and benefits of cooperating with them. Second, we analyze whether exposure to these peacekeeping activities is related to residents' willingness to provide peacekeepers with information. We conduct a mediation analysis to assess the extent to which peacekeeping strategies shape behavior through these beliefs.

We find that exposure to peacekeepers engaging in security activities, relief activities, and abuse explains much of the variation in how civilians perceive peacekeepers and whether they cooperate with them. Exposure to relief and to a lesser extent security activities is associated with higher propensities to provide

information to peacekeepers whereas exposure to abuse is associated with lower propensities. Perhaps more interesting, we find that exposure to abuse has the largest effect on beliefs about peacekeepers, while exposure to relief has the strongest relationship with the propensity to cooperate. Mediation analysis underlines these divergent effects of exposure on beliefs and behavior. While there is some evidence that the proposed beliefs mediate the relationships between exposure to security activities and abuse and cooperation, the link between exposure to relief activities and cooperation primarily works through other mechanisms. These findings highlight the complexity of civilians' views of peacekeepers and may provide guidance for how peacekeepers should allocate resources to improve cooperation.

Exploring these dynamics in Haiti is a hard test for a theory of cooperation with peacekeepers and speaks to a broader set of peacekeeping operations globally. At the time of our survey, MINUSTAH had been operating in Haiti for more than seven years, enabling the formation of strong prior beliefs about peacekeepers. Furthermore, MINUSTAH was accused of causing a tragic cholera epidemic that by the time of our survey had killed thousands of Haitians, and had also been involved in numerous scandals involving forced evictions, unjust use of lethal force, and sexual abuse (Piarroux & Frerichs, 2015; School of Public Health, 2011). Thus, if we find evidence that recent exposure to peacekeepers is associated with cooperation, it may provide a lower bound estimate of this relationship across cases. Moreover, the results from this study may travel to other cases given that MINUSTAH shares many of the same underlying characteristics of other missions in terms of its size and mandate.

This article makes two key contributions to the study of peacekeeping. First, we develop and test a theory of why civilians cooperate with peacekeepers. Understanding cooperation with foreign military forces is at the core of understanding how these interventions work. While a rich literature tests the impact of peacekeeping on whether conflict continues and spreads or peace emerges (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Gilligan & Sergenti, 2008; Beardsley, 2011; Hultman, Kathman & Shannon, 2014), we analyze a micro-level mechanism underlying these effects. We focus on the day-to-day services that peacekeepers deliver to local populations in the form of security and relief. Many other studies of 'peacekeeping from below' have emphasized the role of history, the geopolitical world order, culture, and ideology in shaping opinions towards peacekeepers (Pouliny, 2006; Pugh, 2011; da Costa & Karlsrud, 2012). In contrast to these

theories, which often view civilians' beliefs as the result of their position in a fixed social or economic order, or an inherited frame, we view civilians as responsive to new information as part of their efforts to promote their livelihoods and protect their lives.

Our focus on the importance of information builds on Hultman, Kathman & Shannon (2013), which highlights the role of peacekeepers in reducing conflict by curtailing information sharing between civilians and armed groups. In doing so, our analysis also contributes to a broader literature on how third-party military interventions win the 'hearts and minds' of local populations (Berman, Felter & Shapiro, 2011). Despite the important differences between counterinsurgency and peacekeeping operations, both types of forces need information from local populations and employ similar strategies to cultivate cooperation.

Our second contribution is methodological. By drawing on a household survey of the attitudes and experiences of civilians in a host country, our article quantitatively examines peacekeeping at the subnational level. In this way, we build on studies using peacekeeping events rather than entire operations as the unit of analysis (Dorussen & Gizelis, 2013; Ruggeri, Gizelis & Dorussen, 2013). We build on a growing body of work that examines the micro-level dynamics of peacekeeping and holds that host populations are strategic interlocutors who influence peacekeeping outcomes through their alliances with forces for instability or peace, and participate in local economies (Autesserre, 2010; Jennings & Bøås, 2015). We follow work by Talentino (2007) and Pouligny (2006) to argue that how citizens perceive peacekeepers matters in determining the course of peacekeeping operations. While most studies on this topic have used in-depth ethnography to develop and support theories,<sup>1</sup> our article responds to calls for quantitative work on the topic of civilian interactions with peacekeepers to 'evaluat[e] the strength and exportability of the qualitative findings' (Autesserre, 2014: 495). This study begins to fill this gap.

## Peacekeeping and cooperation

### *Why information matters and civilian expectations*

Cooperation is critical for foreign troops who face severe information asymmetries. Peacekeepers are often deployed to areas where they have little knowledge of

the terrain or political dynamics. In their traditional role of monitoring ceasefires, peacekeepers required information about the military capacity and movements of armed groups, neither of which are perfectly observable. New missions that aim to address the root causes of conflict also require up-to-date situational awareness about sources of political instability, conflict dynamics, public opinion, and shifting coalitions in order to effectively protect civilians and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid (Smith, 1994; Carment & Rudner, 2006; Norheim-Martinsen & Ravndal, 2011). This type of information can enable peacekeepers to generate virtuous cycles that reinforce peace by providing alternatives to individuals who may participate in violence (Leites & Wolf, 1970; Crouch, 2010). The lack of information has contributed to several of the major failures of UN peacekeeping in the 1990s, including the inability to assess factionalization in Bosnia, identify armed group leadership in Somalia, and appropriately assess risk in the DRC (Johnston, 1997; Bellamy, Williams & Griffin, 2010).

Recent peacekeeping policy has embraced the relevance of information sharing. The need for local information during the deployment and operation of a PKO is central to the Brahimi Report on peacekeeping (Brahimi, 2000: 43) and the 2008 peacekeeping guidelines emphasize that 'the experiences of the past 15 years have shown that in order to succeed, United Nations peacekeeping operations must also be perceived as legitimate and credible, particularly in the eyes of the local population' (Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2008). Other UN reports have similarly emphasized the need for better information about local expectations and perceived needs (DPKO-DFS, 2009). Moreover, these policy reports have driven substantial financial investments. As a result of the increasing focus on information, the UN created Joint Mission Analysis Centers (JMACs) within peacekeeping operations beginning in 2006, which are tasked with generating analytical products that draw on information from a variety of sources, including governments, the media, aerial imagery, and human intelligence (Ramjoue, 2011; Dorn, 2009). In Haiti, the intelligence produced by the JMAC, and particularly by local informants, was critical during the 2006–07 military operations against the gangs in the slums of Port-au-Prince (Dorn, 2009).

Generating this type of information requires cultivating cooperative relationships with local populations. This a priori should not be challenging given that the interests of peacekeepers and local populations are often aligned: peacekeepers provide protection to local populations in situations where it is not provided by the state.

<sup>1</sup> For example, all of the articles in the special issue of the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* on the peacekeeping economy use qualitative methods (Jennings & Bøås, 2015).

This alignment rests on two assumptions. First, it assumes civilians desire safety and security and that broad majorities benefit from stability rather than profit from conflict. Second, it assumes that peacekeepers follow mandates grounded in principles of protection. This is not an innocent assumption as research on peacekeeping operations and international institutions suggest they often serve the national interests of great powers (Neack, 1995; Pugh, 2004). Nevertheless, many contend that while PKOs may be launched for motives that are not purely humanitarian, they are generally deployed with the goal of promoting international peace and security that broadly benefits local populations (Gilligan & Stedman, 2003).

In determining whether to provide information to peacekeepers at the individual level, we argue that civilians evaluate the potential benefit of cooperation. In volatile, politicized post-conflict situations, reliable information about peacekeepers is difficult to obtain and civilians must form beliefs about the potential benefits of cooperation based on incomplete information. Therefore, civilians rely in part on their personal experiences with peacekeepers to form opinions about the potential benefits of cooperation.

We posit that civilians make assessments based on three key parameters: peacekeepers' (1) effectiveness, (2) benevolence, and (3) abusiveness. With respect to effectiveness, peacekeepers must meet basic expectations of providing security. If peacekeepers are ineffective in providing this core service, civilians should expect that cooperation will yield few benefits. Furthermore, given that civilians may face retribution by armed actors, they may want to know that peacekeepers can provide sufficient security to protect them.

Additionally, peacekeepers must be perceived as acting in the interests of the population they claim to protect. Peacekeepers may indeed be seen as efficacious, but if individuals perceive the mission as self-serving or exploitative, then cooperation will not generate any benefits in the eyes of civilians. While peacekeeping mandates are fairly explicit in their goals, ambiguity around whether peacekeepers serve great powers or elite interests creates uncertainty that may deter cooperation.

Lastly, effectiveness and benevolence may be offset by abuse. In many deployments, peacekeepers engage in coercive or exploitative sexual relationships and commit other human rights violations (Machel, 1996; Jennings & Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2009; Beber et al., forthcoming). The possibility that contact with peacekeepers will result in physical abuse or extortion is very real (Odello, 2010). Thus, when deciding whether to cooperate, individuals

must assess whether peacekeepers are capable of effectively providing security or relief, whether peacekeeper intentions are benevolent, and whether peacekeepers may abuse them.

#### *Exposure to peacekeeping and local cooperation*

Peacekeeping operations are deployed in rapidly changing crisis situations where information is scarce and misinformation is common. Their mandates are determined and updated annually by the UN Security Council – a foreign and non-transparent body – and their effectiveness is difficult to assess. Given these constraints, how do civilians form beliefs about peacekeepers' effectiveness, benevolence, and abusiveness to evaluate the expected value of cooperation? We focus on the three common types of interactions that citizens have with peacekeepers – interactions in which peacekeepers provide security, provide relief, or engage in abuse – that influence individual beliefs and shape cooperation. Through these interactions, civilians update their beliefs about peacekeepers' intentions, effectiveness, and abusiveness.

We focus on direct experience with peacekeepers for two reasons. First, there is a robust body of qualitative scholarship that demonstrates that individuals' experiences with peacekeepers are an important determinant of their beliefs (Talentino, 2007; Pugh, 2011; da Costa & Karlsrud, 2012). Pouligny (2006: 108) describes how civilians assess peacekeepers based on what they observe: 'There is plenty of testimony recalling in particular the white all-terrain vehicles that invade the streets, and the hotels taken over and occupied by people moving around hither and thither. But there is an important reservation: "We don't see what they are doing".' Individual perceptions scale up into broader narratives around peacekeepers, which Talentino (2007) argues can often be characterized by sovereignty violations and broken promises. Second, we analyze individual experiences with peacekeepers given that a crucial question missions face is how to allocate scarce resources in order to fulfill their mandate. Missions have the latitude to invest in various strategies to keep the peace and generate cooperation. Our analysis of how exposure to different peacekeeper activities relates to civilian propensities to cooperate with peacekeepers can inform these investments.

The provision of security is one of the most common activities that peacekeepers engage in, and in turn one of the most common ways that local populations observe and engage with peacekeepers. Peacekeepers construct outposts, patrol vast swaths of territory,

guard people and resources, and sometimes proactively engage non-state armed actors. In Haiti, although peacekeepers in MINUSTAH are not vested with the authority to arrest civilians, the national police and MINUSTAH often conduct joint operations. MINUSTAH does conduct solo patrols and has the power to temporarily stop, search, and detain civilians. We posit that engaging in security activities may generate civilian cooperation if civilians update their beliefs about how effective, benevolent or abusive peacekeepers are. If peacekeepers exceed civilians' expectations on any of these dimensions, civilian perceptions of the benefits of cooperation with peacekeepers may increase. Evidence from missions in West and Central Africa affirm that individuals' satisfaction with peacekeeping missions is a direct function of security services that civilians observe (Krasno, 2006). We therefore forward the following hypothesis:

*H1:* Exposure to peacekeeping security activities increases cooperation with peacekeepers.

In addition to providing security, relief has become a core function of missions that assist in post-conflict recovery. As the duration of missions has increased, so has the expansion of these services. Relief activities may generate cooperation by signaling good intentions and the ability to make local communities better off. This has driven the UN to implement quick impact projects and other relief activities within communities to build trust, elicit good will, and enhance cooperation. Quick impact projects are low-cost projects designed to build confidence in the mission, open channels of communication between peacekeepers and local communities, and provide rapid benefits (Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2007; Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, 2012).

Existing research suggests that providing these types of relief services can increase cooperation. For example, Andrabi & Das (2010) show that receiving international humanitarian aid after the 2009 Pakistani earthquake increased trust in the foreigners who provided aid and conducted military operations in the region. Similar effects have been observed in other studies (Berman, Felter & Shapiro, 2011), although there is some evidence that this is only true when belligerents do not sabotage relief projects (Crost, Felter & Johnston, 2014; Sexton, forthcoming). Moreover, counterinsurgency strategies strongly embrace the idea that the distribution of humanitarian and development aid helps win 'hearts and minds' for foreign militaries

(Kilcullen, 2006; Cornish, 2009).<sup>2</sup> While most research on this topic examines counterinsurgency operations, there is evidence that similar patterns extend to PKOs as well. Public opinion polls in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Burundi find that relief projects like bridges or school reconstruction are associated with good will for peacekeepers (Krasno, 2005, 2006). We test the following hypothesis related to relief activities:

*H2:* Exposure to peacekeeping relief activities increases cooperation with peacekeepers.

Lastly, citizens in the countries that host PKOs may experience abuse at the hands of the peacekeepers, including both abusive activities carried out in the pursuit of the mission's mandate and abuse carried out by soldiers for personal gain. In Haiti, peacekeepers have been accused of the excessive use of force in their attempts to control gangs and protests, as well as abuse for personal gain including theft, sexual exploitation, and domestic abuse. Many of these forms of abuse also occur in other missions such as Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Beber et al., forthcoming).

The literature on peacekeeping and counterinsurgency suggests that these negative interactions between military forces and local populations have strong effects on how peacekeepers are perceived and on the subsequent level of cooperation (Machel, 1996; Jennings & Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2009; Odello, 2010; Condra & Shapiro, 2012). Particularly in the context of UN peacekeeping, where forces are expected to be neutral and refrain from abuse, we expect that citizens who witness abuse will cooperate less. We forward the following hypothesis:

*H3:* Exposure to peacekeeping abuse reduces cooperation with peacekeepers.

In examining the relationship between abuse and cooperation and comparing abuse to security and relief activities, two important notes are in order. First, while providing security and relief are mandated activities institutionalized in peacekeeping missions, abuse is not. While security and relief provision are a part of a policy

<sup>2</sup> Information sharing with peacekeepers differs in important ways from intelligence sharing with other foreign or domestic military forces. Peacekeepers usually engage in less active conflict, which reduces strategic incentives for civilians to denounce personal or ideological enemies, and reduces the risk that civilians will face sanctions if they provide information.

architecture crafted by the UN, abuse often results from failures of policy to restrain soldiers. However, disciplinary structures and institutional culture are shaped by explicit policy (for example, see Kahl, 2007, on the US military). All types of civilian experiences with peacekeepers are therefore the result of a portfolio choice that UN leaderships make when they decide how to allocate resources between delivering relief, providing security, and restraining abuse.

Second, the hypotheses put forward here are context-specific in two ways. First, the effects of exposure to peacekeepers should depend heavily on civilians' prior beliefs about peacekeepers. If people rationally update their beliefs, then the effect of recent exposure should be negative if peacekeepers underperform relative to expectations, null if they perform according to expectations, or positive if they exceed expectations. We posit that in Haiti and in many contexts civilian populations expect that peacekeepers will generally not be very impactful but also not horribly abusive, and this leads us to predict that exposure to peacekeepers will have effects in specific directions. Thus, there may also be considerable heterogeneity in these effects across cases and across individuals. Second, our approach is to study the average effect of general categories of exposure that apply across most PKOs, although it is possible that exposure to specific activities has different effects. Future work should disaggregate this further.

Although UN policy stresses the importance of cooperation by civilian populations, and qualitative evidence suggests that personal experiences with peacekeepers are a strong determinant of public opinion and behavior, there is little quantitative evidence addressing this question. Using data from our random sample of Haitians living in Port-au-Prince, we bring these three hypotheses to the data and analyze how various types of experiences that civilians have with peacekeepers are correlated with beliefs and cooperation.

## Peacekeeping in Haiti

Haiti remains the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, plagued by political tumult and a history of foreign intervention. Institutional capture by commercial interests, unrestrained security forces, and the crippling policies of foreign powers have all contributed to Haiti's instability (Dubois, 2012; Fatton, 2002). The end of 30 years of authoritarian rule in 1986 ushered in an era of social conflict between a poor majority and elite interests that controlled political, military, and economic

institutions (Naidu, Robinson & Young, 2016). After a military coup deposed the popularly elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991, efforts to reinstate democracy resulted in the first UN peacekeeping operation in Haiti in 1993.

Since this first mission, a series of peacekeeping operations with varying mandates have been renewed almost annually. After Aristide was ousted for a second time in 2004, MINUSTAH was created with a broad mandate from the Security Council to stave off a conflict expected to have destabilizing regional effects. Then Secretary-General Kofi Annan insisted that the peacekeeping operation go beyond the traditional scope and contribute to nation-building and durable development (United Nations, 2004). The mission trained police to support security sector reform, organized and monitored elections, and promoted human rights. In addition, disasters, including severe hurricanes and the devastating earthquake of 2010, have motivated the UN to further expand its mandate to provide humanitarian support.

Over the arc of its deployment, MINUSTAH has been responsible for a series of blunders and transgressions, including the excessive use of force, sexual abuse, and the introduction of a nationwide cholera epidemic (Gaye, 2011). Pouligny (2006: 102) suggests that many Haitians view peacekeepers as predatory. MINUSTAH, however, has also been lauded for its robust operations against Port-au-Prince's gangs, election assistance, and emergency relief efforts. The operation's presence has been criticized by Haitian politicians and the media (Kristoff & Panarelli, 2010; Schuller, 2012), yet it has continued with the consent of the Haitian Government.

## Empirical approach

To analyze how exposure to peacekeeping activities is correlated with civilian beliefs and cooperation, we surveyed a random sample of 585 individuals living in metropolitan Port-au-Prince in the summer of 2011, just over a year after the 2010 earthquake. One contribution of this project is the application of a rigorous random sampling strategy that leverages satellite imagery and geo-coordinates to a research area that has often been studied using purposive sampling. Our empirical approach therefore provides a new representative understanding of perceptions of peacekeepers in a peace-kept city. In this section, we introduce the sampling strategy, survey, and estimation approach.



Figure 1. Satellite imagery of Port-au-Prince used for sampling

These figures visualize the satellite imagery used for sampling neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince. Moving clockwise from the top left captures the three levels of grids constructed for sampling.

### *Sampling frame and strategy*

A key challenge to drawing a representative sample of households in post-crisis zones is the lack of a sampling frame. The earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010 killed an estimated 158,000 people in Port-au-Prince (Kolbe et al., 2010), and at the time of our survey, 550,000 individuals were still displaced (IASC, 2016). This massive displacement rendered the existing 2006 census unusable.

To take a random and equal probability sample of households, we coupled satellite imagery and geographic information. To define a relevant sampling frame, we used geographic coordinates corresponding to the Haitian Institute of Statistics and Information's (IHSI) definition of metropolitan Port-au-Prince to identify the city perimeter. Using these boundaries, we divided the territory within Port-au-Prince into three nested gridded layers. The top layer divided the city into 46 blocks, the middle layer contained 25 blocks within each top layer, and each mid-level block contained 4 lower-level blocks.

This process resulted in the creation of 3,158 blocks. Blocks on the coastline or city limits were trimmed.

To select blocks for surveying, we used stratified sampling across the gridded layers in order to ensure a relatively unclustered distribution of units to survey. Each block was randomly sampled with a probability proportional to its area. Blocks that did not meet a minimum housing density requirement of 20 identifiable structures (including tents and temporary structures) were discarded. The motivation for this criterion was to ensure a sufficient population for surveying and accessibility as metropolitan Port-au-Prince includes some mountainous areas accessible only by foot. When blocks had to be discarded, a random selection was repeated at the level at which the block was discarded. Figure 1 presents satellite imagery of Port-au-Prince and examples of the three levels of grids that we used to sample households.

To conduct the survey, we trained a team of 13 Haitian enumerators in sampling techniques and interview skills. Enumerators were sent to each block with GPS

devices to locate the centroid of the lowest level block. Given the sampling procedure, the location of the centroid was uncorrelated with any geographic or community level characteristics. Enumerators surveyed the  $n$ th household along randomly assigned cardinal directions from the centroid. Within each household, enumerators generated a full roster of family members above the age of 18 and randomly selected one from the list for the interview. Empty households were replaced with their neighbors.

This strategy generated a random and equal probability sample that captured significant variation in neighborhood type within Port-au-Prince: in total, four IDP camps, two relatively wealthy neighborhoods, and 12 neighborhoods that reflect substantial variation in individual- and community-level characteristics entered the sample. Online appendix A includes a list of the neighborhoods surveyed.

This approach provides a framework for post-disaster sampling which allows researchers to generate random samples using available and low-cost technology, although we note two constraints. First, it does not capture populations living beyond the administrative boundaries of the city, likely excluding some pre-earthquake residents who were displaced. Second, this approach cannot recreate a representative sample of the pre-disaster population but is rather a snapshot of the population at a particular moment in time.

### *Measurement strategy and data*

Our household survey was designed to measure individual beliefs, behavior, and exposure to UN peacekeeping. The survey instrument was field-tested and refined through focus groups and a pilot survey to ensure that the measures accurately captured salient daily experiences and behavior of Haitian citizens.<sup>3</sup>

To assess the impact of exposure to peacekeeping activities, we construct three measures: (i) 'PKO security', which measures direct experience with peacekeeper patrols and arrests, (ii) 'PKO relief', which measures exposure to food distributions secured by MINUSTAH, and (iii) 'PKO abuse', which measures whether an individual has ever personally seen a peacekeeper steal, unjustly use force, abuse women or pay for sex. For each of these measures, we use the constituent pieces to construct a mean effects index, which captures the underlying variation between the measures and equally weights these components.

A few challenges warrant mention about measuring these independent variables. First, we rely on self-reported exposure to peacekeeping and as such, issues of attribution impact these measures. Individuals may misattribute activities conducted by other international organizations to MINUSTAH or may not identify the activities conducted by MINUSTAH to the PKO. To mitigate these potential problems, we focus primarily on activities that are easy to visibly associate with peacekeepers because they are typically carried out by groups of uniformed peacekeepers.

Identifying abuse is particularly difficult, both because whether an act is abusive is to some extent subjective and because abuse is often carried out by off-duty peacekeepers. To ensure that general security operations are not misconstrued as abuse, respondents were told that measures of 'unjust use of force' required that peacekeepers were excessively abusive in how they handled individuals. However, whether force is excessive or justified, or whether a sexual encounter is consensual or coercive, remains to some extent subjective. We included this measure because of its importance, particularly in the Haitian context where peacekeepers have been accused of abusing and even killing civilians while raiding gangs and policing protests.

The dependent variables that we use from this survey focus on the beliefs and behavior of respondents. With respect to beliefs, we operationalize effectiveness as the extent to which respondents believe MINUSTAH has the capacity to prevent violent crime, benevolence as the extent to which individuals believe MINUSTAH works on behalf of their interests, and abusiveness as the extent to which MINUSTAH is likely to engage in abusive behavior. We operationalize two measures of cooperation. We capture information sharing by measuring the extent to which individuals are willing to share general information with MINUSTAH and crime reporting as the extent to which individuals are willing to report several types of violence or crimes to MINUSTAH.

To account for other factors that may shape individuals' beliefs and cooperative behavior, we include a set of control variables that we expected to correlate with exposure to peacekeepers, beliefs, and cooperation. Most importantly, we control for exposure to the security and relief activities of the Haitian government and other international organizations. This is particularly important in the case of security activities because MINUSTAH carries out many of its patrols and arrests in conjunction with the Haitian National Police (HNP). Therefore, we control for exposure to the HNP's patrols and arrests. Similarly, we control for exposure to food

<sup>3</sup> The survey instrument is publicly available.

distributions organized by organizations other than MINUSTAH. In addition, we include measures of education, religion, and gender in every specification. Table 2 in Online appendix B reports the original survey questions used to construct these variables. Table 3 in Online appendix C presents summary statistics for all of the constituent parts of each measure.

The summary statistics suggest that respondents generally hold a positive view of MINUSTAH: most people agree or strongly agree that MINUSTAH is controlling the gangs in Port-au-Prince and that MINUSTAH serves Haitians rather than foreign governments. Exposure to peacekeepers is also high. On average, respondents have seen around four MINUSTAH patrols in their neighborhoods in the last month and witnessed peacekeepers make one arrest in the past year. Roughly 17% of our sample has seen MINUSTAH engage in at least one of the abusive forms of behavior, including paying for sex, stealing, unjustly using force, and abusing women. Exposure to PKO relief projects is lower than exposure to security activities. On average, our respondents have witnessed roughly three food distributions secured by MINUSTAH in the past year.

Given media portrayals and qualitative evidence on negative perceptions of MINUSTAH, respondents report a surprisingly high willingness to cooperate with MINUSTAH. Almost three out of four respondents reported that it is 'sure' (30%) or 'possible' (41%) that they would provide general information to MINUSTAH. On reporting crimes, 21–57% say that it is 'sure' (7–33%) or 'possible' (12%–24%) that they would report four different crimes to MINUSTAH. In addition, 3.4% of our sample of Port-au-Prince residents has shared information with MINUSTAH, 2.3% of the population reported approaching MINUSTAH voluntarily to provide information, and 1.9% provided information to MINUSTAH upon request.

Our measures of cooperation are hypothetical and one concern is that they may not reflect respondents' behavior in reality. To test whether this might be the case we examine whether past cooperation is predictive of prospective cooperation. People who have provided information to MINUSTAH in the past are much more likely to report that they would do it in the future: 88% of people who said that they had provided information to peacekeepers in the past reported being likely or very likely to provide them with information in the future. People who report being very likely to provide information to MINUSTAH in the future are eight times as likely to have provided information in the past than those who report being very unlikely to share

information. We focus on prospective cooperation in our analysis to avoid introducing post-treatment bias.

### Estimation

To assess the impact of exposure to peacekeeping activities – security activities, relief activities, and abuse on individual beliefs and cooperative behavior – we estimate the following equation using ordinary least squares:

$$Y_{ije} = \alpha_j + \beta_1 S_i + \beta_2 R_i + \beta_3 A_i + \phi \mathbf{X}'_i + \lambda_e + \varepsilon_{ije} \quad (1)$$

where  $i$  is the individual in neighborhood  $j$  interviewed by enumerator  $e$ ,  $S$  measures exposure to peacekeeping security,  $R$  captures exposure to peacekeeping relief, and  $A$  corresponds to peacekeeping abuse.  $\mathbf{X}'_i$  is a vector of individual-level controls,  $\alpha_n$  is a set of neighborhood fixed effects,  $\lambda_e$  represents enumerator fixed effects, and  $\varepsilon_i$  the error.  $Y_{ije}$  is a measure of an individual's beliefs or willingness to cooperate with peacekeepers. In all specifications, we cluster standard errors at the neighborhood level and observations are unweighted.

Our identifying assumption is that conditioning on a set of individual-level confounders and enumerator and neighborhood fixed effects generates unbiased estimates of the correlation between peacekeeping activities and beliefs and behavior. However, it is important that our results be interpreted as correlations rather than estimates of the causal effects of peacekeepers on beliefs and behavior. In the section on robustness checks, we use sensitivity analysis to assess the robustness of our results to omitted variable bias and discuss the determinants of exposure to peacekeepers. It is also important to note that we analyze data from a cross-section rather than a panel. As such, our inferences are drawn from a snapshot of the correlation between exposure to activities and beliefs and behavior rather than changes over time.

## Results

### *Peacekeeping exposure, expectations, and cooperation*

We first examine the relationship between exposure to peacekeepers and beliefs. Table I presents results for regressions that analyze how exposure to peacekeeping security, abuse and relief correlate with individual beliefs over peacekeeping effectiveness, abusiveness and benevolence. Columns 1–2 report results over effectiveness, Columns 3–4 over abusiveness, and Columns 5–6 over benevolence. For ease of interpretation and consistency across the dependent variables in the table, we have inverted abusiveness such that higher scores represent

Table I. Peacekeeping exposure and beliefs

	<i>Effectiveness</i>		<i>Abusiveness</i>		<i>Benevolence</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(Intercept)	0.279 (0.182)	0.300* (0.142)	-0.059 (0.121)	-0.689** (0.140)	0.192 (0.172)	-0.142 (0.197)
PKO security	0.182** (0.070)	0.183** (0.068)	0.064 (0.075)	0.212** (0.072)	0.225** (0.072)	0.138 (0.098)
PKO abuse	-0.308** (0.073)	-0.218** (0.052)	-0.528** (0.065)	-0.463** (0.053)	-0.236** (0.050)	-0.130** (0.044)
PKO relief	0.264* (0.122)	0.188* (0.094)	-0.018 (0.116)	0.009 (0.119)	0.090 (0.083)	0.120* (0.064)
HNP security	-0.053 (0.065)	-0.126 <sup>†</sup> (0.072)	0.005 (0.069)	-0.013 (0.074)	-0.231** (0.061)	-0.144* (0.069)
Food distribution	-0.019 (0.028)	-0.023 (0.025)	0.013 (0.025)	0.007 (0.026)	-0.003 (0.015)	-0.009 (0.012)
Education	-0.009 (0.010)	-0.014 (0.009)	0.004 (0.010)	-0.001 (0.008)	-0.011 (0.013)	-0.010 (0.012)
Female	-0.075 (0.054)	-0.060 (0.072)	-0.038 (0.095)	0.038 (0.079)	-0.075 (0.092)	0.028 (0.100)
Catholic	-0.217 <sup>†</sup> (0.114)	-0.077 (0.083)	0.056 (0.067)	-0.002 (0.086)	-0.140 (0.101)	-0.070 (0.080)
Neighborhood FEs		✓		✓		✓
Enumerator FEs		✓		✓		✓
N	462	458	464	460	462	458
R <sup>2</sup>	0.120	0.371	0.165	0.368	0.087	0.307

This table presents estimates of the correlation between PKO exposure and beliefs. Standard errors clustered at the neighborhood level; significant at <sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ . The dependent variable in Columns 1 and 2 is the perceived effectiveness of peacekeepers in providing security. In Columns 3 and 4 it is their perceived propensity to abuse civilians, inverted such that low scores represent high abusiveness. In Columns 5 and 6 it is the perceived extent to which peacekeepers act in the interests of Haitian civilians. All continuous variables are standardized.

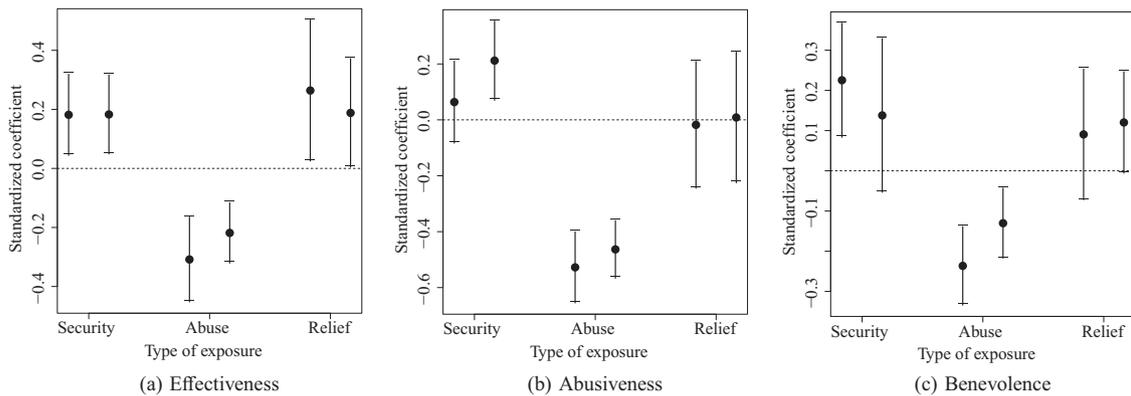


Figure 2. Coefficients on exposure to peacekeepers and beliefs

Each point corresponds to an estimated coefficient, and the lines display 95% confidence intervals.

more positive views towards MINUSTAH. In Columns 1, 3 and 5, we include potential confounders and in Columns 2, 4, and 6, we also introduce neighborhood and enumerator fixed effects. Figure 2 plots the coefficients from this analysis.

This analysis reveals a strong correlation between individual experiences with peacekeepers and beliefs about them. This is a non-trivial finding that highlights the opportunity for peacekeepers to continuously engage local populations in order to influence how peacekeepers are perceived.

Table II. Peacekeeping exposure and cooperation

	<i>Information sharing</i>		<i>Crime reporting</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(Intercept)	0.179 (0.162)	0.206 (0.187)	0.007 (0.155)	0.092 (0.133)
PKO security	0.129* (0.064)	0.198 <sup>†</sup> (0.103)	0.163** (0.038)	0.126 <sup>†</sup> (0.072)
PKO abuse	-0.096 (0.067)	-0.119 <sup>†</sup> (0.069)	-0.082 <sup>†</sup> (0.047)	-0.082 <sup>†</sup> (0.047)
PKO relief	0.281** (0.102)	0.256* (0.104)	0.246* (0.117)	0.306** (0.101)
HNP security	0.194** (0.065)	0.076 (0.070)	0.094 <sup>†</sup> (0.056)	-0.082 (0.063)
Food distribution	-0.041 <sup>†</sup> (0.022)	-0.041 (0.025)	-0.025 (0.022)	-0.035 <sup>†</sup> (0.021)
Education	0.003 (0.008)	-0.001 (0.010)	0.015 <sup>†</sup> (0.009)	0.008 (0.009)
Female	-0.106 (0.128)	-0.099 (0.110)	0.046 (0.071)	0.005 (0.058)
Catholic	-0.065 (0.125)	0.001 (0.122)	-0.104 (0.078)	-0.063 (0.092)
Neighborhood FEs		✓		✓
Enumerator FEs		✓		✓
N	485	481	445	441
R <sup>2</sup>	0.079	0.207	0.106	0.277

This table presents results assessing the correlation between the interaction of PKO exposure and cooperation. Standard errors clustered at the neighborhood level; significant at <sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ . The dependent variable is willingness to share information with peacekeepers in Columns 1 and 2 and willingness to report crimes to peacekeepers in Columns 3 and 4. All continuous variables are standardized.

A set of more specific trends emerge. First, peacekeeping abuse is negatively and substantially correlated with perceived effectiveness, our inverted measure of abusiveness, and benevolence across all specifications. Exposure to abuse not only shapes expectations of peacekeepers' abusiveness, but also affects views of their effectiveness and benevolence. These results underscore the pernicious and pervasive effects of abuse, and speak to the importance of investments in internal training and policing.

Exposure to peacekeeping security tells a generally positive story: these experiences are correlated with improvements in expectations of peacekeepers' effectiveness and abusiveness. This suggests that the core activities that peacekeepers engage in inspire confidence.

Lastly, exposure to relief activities is positively correlated with perceptions of effectiveness, yet has no impact

on perceived abusiveness and only a weak relationship with perceived benevolence. One interpretation of these results is that when civilians see peacekeepers providing relief, they gain a general signal about peacekeepers' capacity to provide security or relief.

This analysis tells a complex story about how experiences with peacekeepers are correlated with beliefs. The substantial effect of exposure to peacekeeping abuse across each type of belief highlights the deep relationship between abuse and how peacekeepers are viewed. The coefficient on exposure to abuse is in almost all cases larger than that on either security or relief. This underscores the importance of not only investing in the provision of security and relief but also investing in policies that restrain peacekeepers from abusing civilians.

Beliefs that individuals have about peacekeepers are normatively important, but we hypothesized that they also affect mission success by shaping whether individuals engage peacekeepers. Specifically, if exposure to peacekeepers' security and relief activities is related to positive differences in perceived effectiveness and abusiveness, is exposure also related to increased willingness to cooperate? Conversely, does the large negative relationship between exposure to abuse and the belief that peacekeepers will restrain themselves translate into an unwillingness to cooperate?

Table II reports results for regressions that assess the correlation between exposure to peacekeeping activities and cooperation. Columns 1 and 2 analyze the impact of exposure on willingness to share general information with peacekeepers and Columns 3 and 4 report results for the relationship between exposure and willingness to share information about specific crimes. Figure 3 plots the coefficients from this analysis.

Analysis of the relationship between peacekeeping activities and civilian cooperation tells a consistent story: exposure to peacekeeping security and relief is associated with substantially higher reported willingness to share general and crime-related information while exposure to peacekeeping abuse is negatively correlated with these forms of cooperation. In the case of exposure to relief activities, these effects are consistently statistically significant, while the effects of exposure to security and abuse are not distinguishable from zero in our preferred specifications.

Comparing these results to those presented in Table I on beliefs, we find important differences in which types of exposure to peacekeepers matter. Witnessing abuse, for example, is associated with large differences in all three beliefs about peacekeepers, but has a small and statistically insignificant relationship with willingness to

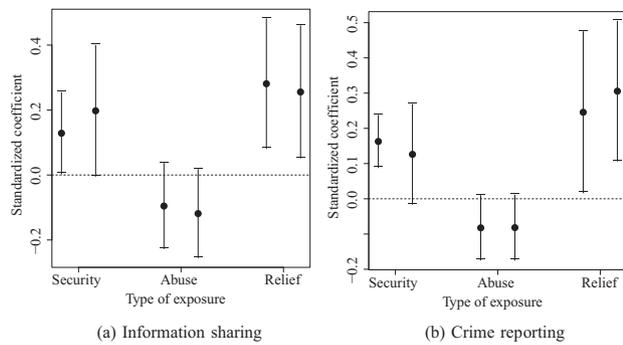


Figure 3. Coefficients on exposure to peacekeepers and behavior

Each point corresponds to an estimated coefficient, and the lines display 95% confidence intervals.

cooperate. Exposure to security activities is related to both more positive beliefs and higher willingness to cooperate, although in our preferred specifications in Columns 2 and 4 the coefficients on security are not statistically significant. Finally, although exposure to relief activities had only a moderate relationship with beliefs, it has a much more robust effect on behavior. These differences highlight the fact that beliefs may not map directly on to behavior. Behavior may be driven by alternative beliefs or by non-conscious influences.

Our proposed theory suggests that exposure to peacekeeping activities shapes beliefs and that beliefs in turn affect cooperative behavior. To analyze the extent to which beliefs mediate the relationships between exposure to peacekeepers and cooperation, we implement the mediation analysis procedure articulated in Imai & Yamamoto (2013), which decomposes correlations into a direct effect and mediated effect while controlling for other potential mechanisms. We use this method, described in full in Online appendix D, to analyze how exposure to peacekeeping activities shapes cooperative behavior by changing underlying individual beliefs.

A few notes are in order about this approach. Identifying the mediated and direct effects requires invoking a sequential ignorability assumption, which requires that the independent variable and the mediator are independent of outcomes conditional on control variables (Imai, Keele & Yamamoto, 2010; Imai et al., 2011; Imai & Yamamoto, 2013). These assumptions are similar to those underlying any correlational analysis, but have caused some to advocate abandoning this method (Green, Ha & Bullock, 2010).

Overall, the results suggest that in most cases only a small portion of the relationship between exposure to peacekeepers and cooperation seems to work through the

beliefs that we measured. Across the 18 types of exposure, behaviors, and mediators, none of the mediation effects are statistically distinguishable from zero. However, in the relationships between exposure to security and crime reporting and exposure to abuse and information provision, the proposed mediators are estimated to explain a large proportion (33–77%) of the total effects. Taken together, their magnitude does suggest that beliefs about peacekeepers may play some role in the relationship between exposure and behavior. However, large proportions of the total effects, particularly in the case of exposure to relief activities, are driven by other beliefs, or unmeasured variance in the proposed beliefs, or influences on behavior that operate at a more subconscious level.

Finally, we test whether exposure to peacekeeper activities may have multiplicative effects by estimating the interactions of the three strategies for all outcomes and reporting the results in Online appendix E. We find no effect on the interaction between security and relief. The only consistent interaction effects that emerge are between abuse and relief and abuse and security on perceptions of abusiveness, suggesting that abuse is perceived as worse by people who see peacekeepers engaging in other activities.

### Robustness

To assess the robustness of our findings we conduct four supplementary analyses. First, we examine the determinants of exposure to peacekeeping to determine whether there are signs of selection into exposure. One concern is that if peacekeepers target people who provide them with information services, our results could be driven by reverse causation. On the other hand, if exposure to peacekeepers is explained by a non-strategic factor such as distance to a MINUSTAH base, then we have less cause for concern. In Online appendix F, we show that there is no evidence that people who have ever provided information to MINUSTAH, conditional on having been approached by MINUSTAH, are more exposed. On the other hand, distance to a MINUSTAH base is strongly predictive of exposure.

Second, we conduct a sensitivity analysis based on the approach formalized by Oster (forthcoming) to model how robust our results are to unmeasured heterogeneity. The intuition behind this approach is assessing how large the effect of unobserved confounding factors would need to be to change the observed results. We report these results in Online appendix I. In our analysis of cooperative behavior, the results are robust to including covariates that are twice as strong as our individual-level controls and enumerator and neighborhood fixed effects.

Third, we test the robustness of our results to alternative specifications and conduct a 'leave-one-out' analysis to confirm that the results are not being driven by any particular neighborhood or measure. In Online appendix H, we show that alternative ways of coding exposure to abuse, our most subjective exposure measure, produce similar results. Second, we show that the results are stable across specifications that drop each of the 20 neighborhoods in our sample.

Finally, we implement a matching algorithm to generate balance across observable pretreatment confounders and re-run the analysis. Analyses from the matching estimators are generally consistent with those from the core regressions.

## Conclusions

Peacekeeping operations are a cornerstone of the international community's strategy to reduce conflict across the world. As current missions are renewed and new operations deployed, identifying why civilians cooperate with peacekeepers is integral to preventing the recurrence of violent conflict. In this article, we provide a theoretical framework that explains the conditions in which civilians cooperate with peacekeepers and test this theory using an original dataset from a random sample of households in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. We argue that civilians assess whether the benevolence and effectiveness of peacekeepers outweighs the possibility of abuse, as these parameters shape the expected value of cooperation. In low-information post-conflict environments, individuals look to their personal experiences: interactions with peacekeepers serve as signals about their interests, capacity, and abusiveness that lead civilians to update their beliefs and thus influence their decisions to cooperate with peacekeepers.

Our analysis shows that exposure to peacekeeping activities explains individual beliefs and behavior. First, exposure to peacekeeping security and relief activities improves both beliefs about peacekeepers and cooperation with them while exposure to peacekeeper abuse undermines them. However, the impact is not symmetric: whereas abuse has a larger impact than security and relief on beliefs, the opposite is true for cooperation where security and relief have a larger effect. While exposure to these activities shapes both beliefs and behavior, mediation analysis suggests that a non-trivial portion of the relationship between exposure to peacekeepers and behavior, particularly in the case of relief, is not mediated by the beliefs that we measured.

Our analysis also tells a cautionary story as exposure to peacekeeping abuse consistently and dramatically

undermines civilian perceptions of peacekeepers. Our results suggest that peacekeepers seeking to cultivate cooperation may get a larger payoff from investments in relief and security than in restraint from abuse. Future research should test for the causal effects of such investments, and take into account the possibility of differential costs, issues of scale, and behaviors beyond information provision.

While these results have powerful implications for peacekeepers, a key question is the extent to which they apply to other contexts or missions. Our study was conducted inside metropolitan Port-au-Prince and speaks to the experiences of citizens who reside in this particular urban capital. MINUSTAH forces were disproportionately deployed in Port-au-Prince and this analysis therefore captures many of the peacekeeper-civilian interactions in Haiti. These results may actually provide insight into other cases as peacekeepers often and increasingly tend to be deployed in heavily urban areas (Ruggeri, Gizelis & Dorussen, forthcoming).

While there is some reason to believe that these results should generalize to other PKOs, several contextual factors may be important. Although MINUSTAH was deployed to prevent a civil war, Haiti's history of political instability and the 2010 earthquake are not representative of other countries with PKOs. Nevertheless, MINUSTAH does share commonalities with other deployments. Like other missions such as the PKO in the Democratic Republic of Congo, MINUSTAH was launched with a limited mandate focused on preventing conflict that then evolved to include institution building, humanitarian assistance, and service provision. MINUSTAH is also similar in size to PKOs in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Lastly, these results may provide some insight into strategies of winning hearts and minds in other types of military interventions.

Our results are encouraging for peacekeepers, but also highlight crucial challenges. If individual exposure to peacekeepers is such a strong factor in willingness to cooperate, peacekeepers may have the opportunity to generate cooperation, even in settings where negative attitudes towards peacekeepers should be deeply entrenched. Unfortunately, performance has fallen short of expectations in many missions around the world. Episodes of abuse, lackluster provision of security, and inefficient relief activities are common and are quickly noticed by local civilians. Our results suggest that improving the quality of these interactions through relief activities, security activities, and respectful treatment of

civilians is a powerful way to help missions accomplish their mandates.

## Replication data

The dataset, survey, and code for the empirical analysis in this article, along with the Online appendix, can be found at <http://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets>.

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