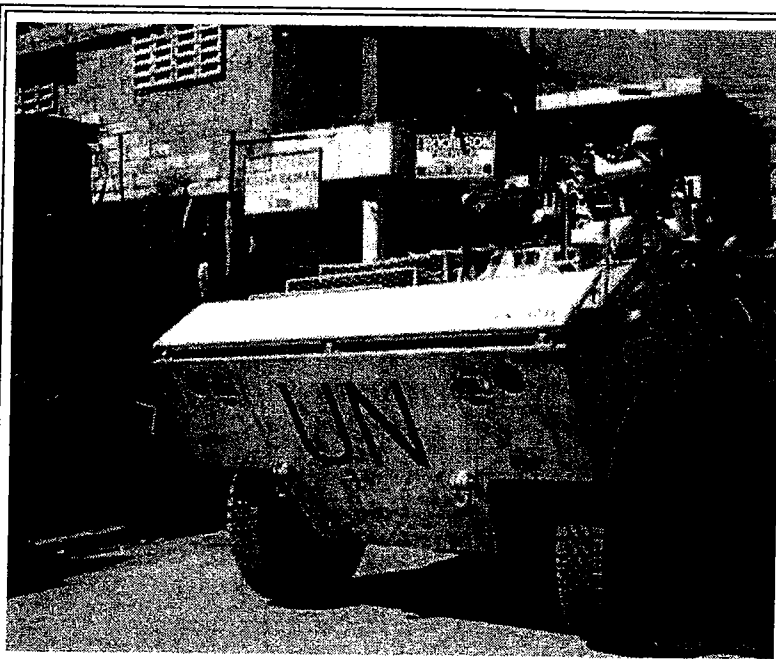


UN occupies Bel Air in Haiti

Port au Prince, Haiti (HIP) - Hundreds of Brazilian soldiers and special units of the Haitian National Police stormed the pro-Aristide neighborhood of Bel Air in the early morning hours of January 5. Residents were surprised and frightened by the armed incursion as gunfire broke out. Witnesses reported that five persons were killed as the operation unfolded.

Bel Air is a slum in the capital of Port au Prince that has served as a launching site for demonstrations demanding the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Aristide was ousted last February 29th amid charges he was kidnapped by U.S. Marines and remains in exile in the Republic of South Africa. The Bel Air slum had been under siege by police since violence erupted last September 30th after police opened fire on unarmed demonstrators.

Following the military operation, UN peacekeepers were seen providing photo opportunities to the press as they fixed a few water pipes and cleared the carcasses of burned out vehicles



Photos: © 2005 *Haiti Information Project* - A UN armored personnel vehicle rolls through Delmas 2 in Bel Air. Five people were killed on January 5 when the UN entered the pro-Lavalas neighborhood under the pretext of cleaning the streets of garbage. Although the UN took advantage of several photo opportunities to show their public works projects yesterday, their only duty January 5 was to enter the roiling slum on heavily armed patrols.

blocking the road. One resident who refused to give their name fearing reprisals stated, "Do you think we want to live like this? We are more afraid of the police coming in here and killing everyone than we are of the rats and the garbage. Those wrecked cars were our security because it stopped the police from coming in here at night and shooting us. Now that the UN has opened the door for them we don't know what is going to happen to us. Look what they did in Cite de Dieu yesterday."

The UN incursion came one day after Haitian police were accused of committing another deadly raid in a neighborhood close to Haiti's National Theater. In Cite de Dieu the police reportedly killed six people including a 16 year-old girl and later justified the slaughter claiming they were bandits.

An unidentified representative of Aristide's Lavalas party commented on the situation, "If the UN is really going to provide security to our communities then they must stop the police from murdering our citizens. We all want peace but you cannot blame people for wanting to defend themselves while the UN allows the police to commit murder and fill the jails with political prisoners. They must stop the police and the former military from murdering our citizens.

"Last October 28th the police executed four young men they thought were Lavalas and the UN did nothing to stop them.



©2004 *Haiti Information Project* - On October 28, 2004 the Haitian police entered the slum of Bel Air and shot these four young men execution style. Now that the UN controls Bel Air, members of Aristide's Lavalas party demanded the UN stop the police and the former military from committing more murders in their communities.



Some residents decided to leave Bel Air after the UN assumed control of the streets on January 5, 2005. Although the UN claims responsibility for security, members of Lavalas accuse the multinational force of

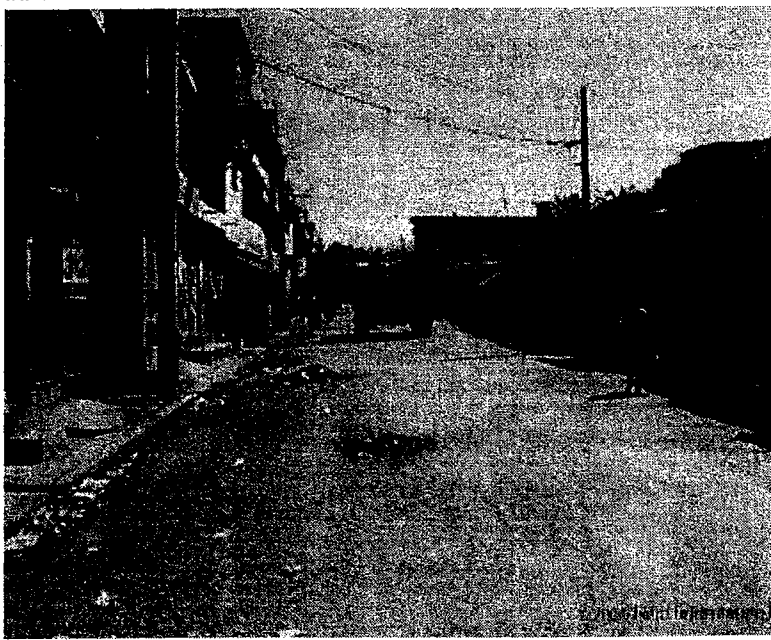
"The UN cannot on one-hand say they are bringing security while on the other they claim to be assisting the police as they kill us, beat us and arrest us. It is a contradiction they must resolve or there will never be peace. They must control the police and stop the killing! They must support us in releasing all the political prisoners filling our jails!

"For now, it appears the UN are equally responsible for this partisan campaign to exterminate Lavalas that is clearly meant to silence our opposition to the coup of February 29, 2004."

allowing the Haitian National Police (PNH) to execute armed raids in poor neighborhoods where support for ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide remains strong.



Despite UN claims of having entered Bel Air with force on January 5th to clear the streets of trash, other than a few carefully planned photo opportunities with the Associated Press, there was little evidence of progress the next day.



A UN armored personnel vehicle rolls through a nearly deserted street in the neighborhood of Bel Air. Residents