

**Brazilian peacekeepers failing to protect citizens from gangs, siding with government soldiers**

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RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP) - A Harvard University study released here Tuesday said Brazilian peacekeeping troops in Haiti have sided with government forces and failed to protect ordinary citizens from armed gangs.

James Cavallaro, Associate Director of the Human Rights Program at Harvard University Law School, said Brazilian peacekeepers aren't fulfilling their mission to ensure rights and disarm the population.

"What the mission is doing is lending logistical support to forces that are now in power," said Cavallaro. "Instead of going out and disarming everyone, what have they done? They've taken the side of the current government and are supporting them."

Brazil has more than 1,100 troops in Haiti and replaced the United States in 2004 as head of the peacekeeping mission, which began after an armed rebellion forced Aristide from office and overthrew his government.

Cavallaro and a group of observers twice traveled to Haiti, in October and January, to monitor the peacekeeping troops. Over 14 days, the observers spoke with more than 100 people, including government workers, armed groups, residents and members of the peacekeeping force.

The report, "Keeping Peace in Haiti," compiled by Cavallaro and the Brazilian rights group Global Justice, accuses the Brazilian peacekeepers of firing a tank gun on supporters of ex-President Jean-Bertrande Aristide, killing one.

The report also says the peacekeepers have not ended impunity in the largely lawless country and haven't disarmed private militias, adding to unrest.

Brazilian officials blamed confusion over the peacekeeping force's authority in Haiti.

"The people who commit violence are the police and not the Brazilian troops," an official at the Foreign Ministry's press office. "They are a violent and absolutely degraded police force. Since the mandate does not give the troops authority over the police, it is this double command that is at the root of a lot of problems."

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