



Hédi Annabi

1943 – 2010

Hédi Annabi, a national of Tunisia, was head of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). He served the UN for almost 30 years in various humanitarian and peacekeeping roles.

Hédi joined the Organization in 1981 as Principal Officer in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in Southeast Asia and subsequently became Director of that Office.

For the next decade, Hédi was closely associated with the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to contribute to a comprehensive political settlement in Cambodia. Following the Paris Agreements in October 1991, Hédi was instrumental in the establishment of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

A year after his work related to Cambodia, Hédi joined the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as Director of its Africa Division and in 1996 as Officer-in-Charge of the Department's Office of Operations. In 1997, Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Hédi as Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and, in 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon chose him to head MINUSTAH.

To say that Hédi was well respected is an understatement. A consummate international civil servant, his native Tunisia honoured him with the Knight of the Order of the Republic.

In paying tribute to Hédi, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described him as "an icon of UN peacekeeping, there was no better representative of the international civil service. A mild man with the heart of a lion ... he was proud of the UN mission in Haiti – proud of its accomplishments in bringing stability and hope to Haiti's people, proud of his UN staff."

Former Chef de Cabinet Iqbal Riza wrote that Hédi "reported on specific operations and their challenges to the Security Council, where he became a favourite for his crisp presentations – although they were often laced with barbs for its members for their lapses, in particular for Western governments which enthusiastically supported new operations but balked at dispatching their own troops."

Hédi loved his work and often worked long hours late into the night. Quiet, soft-spoken or reserved are adjectives used in connection with Hédi and many remember his sense of humour and prodigious memory.

"Hédi worked long hours to make a difference to the world," said Lieutenant General Daniel Opande, a long-time colleague and the former Force Commander of the UN's missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

"He was the quintessential diplomat who had good manners and was polite," said a close colleague, adding that "he was meticulous to the extreme, particularly when it came to peacekeeping reports."

Another remembered Hédi giving a tribute that was moving "in a quiet and dignified way" for a staff member who passed away.

Hédi received a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Tunis and diplomas in political science from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris and the Institut des Hautes Etudes Internationales in Geneva.

Hédi is survived by his wife, Danièle, his mother, Ferida, his brothers, Hassen and Abdelaziz, and their families, as well his stepson, Nicolas, and his family.