

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Widow of Haiti's Slain President Indicted In Husband's Assassination

Local probe into president's death faces scrutiny over political bias

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Former First Lady Martine Moise.

Approximately 50 people have been charged in the conspiracy to assassinate Haiti's former President Jovenel Moise, including former First Lady Martine Moise, former Prime Minister Claude Joseph, and other state officials.

Judge Walther Wesser Voltaire, who is in charge of the investigation into the 2021 murder of Mr. Moise, on Monday accepted the criminal complaint filed weeks ago by public prosecutor Edler Guillaume which alleges that Mrs. Moise, while not directly

involved in planning the overnight raid that killed the president and seriously injured herself, nevertheless was somehow complicit in the events that unfolded on July 7. Martine Moise had ambitions of succeeding her husband as president, witnesses reportedly testified.

Apart from Mrs. Moise and Mr. Joseph, Léon Charles, former police chief and Dimitri Hérard, former commander of the Security Unit General of the National Palace, have both also been referred to the country's criminal court. Félix Badio, a close friend of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, was also charged.

The local investigation into President Moise's murder has been heavily criticized from the outset, with some saying that it has been irreparably tainted by political influence. Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who made several calls to Mr. Badio in the minutes before and after Mr. Moise's assassination, has been accused of weaponizing the country's justice system to persecute his opponents.

With a defunct legislature, Mr. Henry has defacto control over Haiti's entire government apparatus as the country sinks further and further into a destabilizing spiral of violence, with heavily-armed criminal gangs consolidating power in the face of the deterioration of the state governance.

While it is unclear when, or whether, any of those charged by Judge Voltaire will face trial in Haiti, prosecutions underway in the United States have resulted in guilty pleas from six of the 11 defendants accused of plotting to send Colombian mercenaries to kidnap, and ultimately murder, the Haitian President as he slept.