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Unrest Erupts in Haiti After Government Announces That Fuel Prices Would More Than Double

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Conditions in Haiti continue to alarm watchers in the region and around the world, as disturbing news continue to dominate the headlines emanating from the country.

Since the [assassination of President Jovenel Moise](#) in July of last year followed by [a devastating earthquake the very next month](#), the Republic of Haiti has been hit with a barrage of crises - economic, political, security, and humanitarian.

In recent developments, protests have erupted across several Haitian cities in response to a government-announced hike in fuel costs.

Last Wednesday, officials announced plans to more than double gas prices, which have historically been significantly lower than prices on the international market. Prime Minister Ariel Henry said that gasoline would jump from \$2.10 US per gallon to 4.79. Diesel is scheduled to move from 2.97 to 5.63 per gallon, while kerosene will go from 2.96 to 5.59 per gallon.

A population already struggling under inflationary prices in other areas erupted following the announcement, blocking streets in the capital of Port au Prince with burning tires, vehicles and boulders. Gunfire, looting and arson spread through the capital and surrounding cities. A day after the announcement, a warehouse operated by the United Nations Food Program was looted and burned down by rioters — it contained supplies meant to feed almost 100,000 school children over the next three months.

The country's security apparatus has long been unable to control escalating violence, and in the face of the widespread citizen uprising over the cost of living, armed gangs have been taking advantage of the situation to step up their reign of terror, with an increase in kidnappings for ransom.

Meanwhile, the Dominican Republic has been taking steps to halt gang violence and gang activity at the border. Last week, President Luis Abinader remarked on the progress of the 164-kilometer wall on the land border between the two countries, which he said is meant to keep out drug, weapons, and human traffickers.

Earlier this month, Abinader also announced bans on prominent Haitian gang leaders, including Jimmy Cherizier and Jean Pierre Gabriel. More controversially, political actors were also among the list of prohibited travelers, including Claude Joseph, Haiti's former acting Prime Minister and President.

Joseph has fired back at the move, calling it a "scandalous decision", and categorizing it as a reflection of Abinader's "anti-Haitian" agenda.

Meanwhile the United Nations is calling for a de-escalation in the violence. The spokesperson for Secretary General Antonio Guterres said the UN chief was pleading for "all relevant stakeholders" to allow the National Police to protect the population.

It is unclear whether the populace enraged over rising prices, the gang members sowing terror among the citizenry, or the administration seemingly helpless to regain control over the country, will heed the words of the UN head, who has called on everyone involved to "rise about their differences and to engage in a peaceful and inclusive dialogue on a constructive way forward."