

U.S. Warns Americans to Avoid Haiti (AP)

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WASHINGTON - Security in Haiti remains unpredictable and dangerous, and Americans should not travel to the Caribbean nation except for emergencies, the State Department said Friday.

"Travel in Haiti still involves serious risks," the State Department said, warning of random violent crimes such as kidnapping, carjacking and assault.

It said the dangers were significant because of "the absence of an effective police force ... the potential for looting (and) the presence of intermittent roadblocks set up by armed gangs or by the police."

Even within the capital, Port-au-Prince, travel can be so hazardous that some areas are off-limits to staff of the U.S. Embassy, which has imposed a 1 a.m.-5 a.m. curfew for its staff, the warning said.

In Port-au-Prince, officials said two beheaded bodies, one wrapped in tires and set ablaze, were found Thursday, the latest victims of violence fueled by gangs seeking the reinstatement of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Through Thursday, the death toll stood at 20 from the violence, which included the decapitation of three policemen last week.