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## Violence in Haiti claims at least 46 lives

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**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti** - Violence in Haiti's capital has claimed at least 46 lives, with hospital records showing Tuesday that 17 victims were shot and killed this week. Many shops and markets remained closed as hulks of torched cars and bonfires of tires smoldered in the streets.

Port-au-Prince has been beset by gunbattles and beheadings since a Sept. 30 demonstration marking the 1991 coup that first overthrew President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. In February, the former priest fled the country again after a three-week revolt led by a street gang and former soldiers.

Tensions still are simmering with Aristide supporters demanding his return and an end to the "invasion" by foreign troops. U.S. Marines arrived in Haiti the day Aristide left and were replaced by U.N. peacekeepers sent in June to stabilize the country.

Rebels who want the interim government to formally reinstate the army that Aristide disbanded have accused the peacekeepers of doing little to halt the violence and say that they are ready to end it.

On Monday, as mourners gathered for the funeral of five assassinated police officers, gunfire crackled around the capital and businesses shut their doors again.

Records at Port-au-Prince hospital seen by The Associated Press showed 17 people with gunshot wounds died Monday, eight of them in the Cite Soleil seaside slum that is filled with Aristide supporters and street gangs, and three in Martissant, a western neighborhood that has been a flashpoint in the recent unrest. That raised the toll to at least 46 killed since Sept. 30.

One man was reportedly shot and killed near the presidential palace.

"There was shooting everywhere," said Lovely Pierre-Louis, 19. "I saw a man walking across that street with a boy, then the shooting came again, and he was on the ground with his head bleeding, and the boy was running."

Messile Sylviani, a 30-year-old beautician, said her salon closed an hour after opening Monday, and she returned home, a block from where the man had been shot.

"Now I'm so scared," she said. "We're all stressed out because we know shooting could start again any time."

On Sept. 30, police reportedly shot and killed two people at a demonstration. The headless bodies of three police officers turned up the same day, and government officials blamed Aristide militants and a new campaign called "Operation Baghdad."

Aristide supporters say the police started the violence, which has plagued businesses and complicated efforts to help flood survivors in the northwestern city of Gonaives.

Tropical Storm Jeanne left 200,000 homeless people there who are living on rooftops and in the street.

CARE, an international humanitarian organization, suspended emergency food distributions for two days in Gonaives, which is supplied by ship and by road from Port-au-Prince.

"We have enough food in Gonaives to meet needs for only four or five days," said Abby Maxman, Haiti's CARE director. "We're already cutting back deliveries to conserve the supply, and we might have to consider suspending them if the security situation doesn't improve."

Unrest in the capital also blocked access to the seaport for several days last week, cutting off the major route for U.N. World Food Program shipments.

U.N. forces are providing 24-hour security at CARE's warehouse in Gonaives, where street gangs and ordinary civilians have looted aid shipments, as well as escorting large convoys of WFP and CARE trucks, Maxman said. But he said the United Nations has reduced troop levels there to address rising violence in the capital.

Aristide, now living in South Africa, claims the United States kidnapped him and that he still is Haiti's elected leader. The United States denies his charges.

At an empty street market in Port-au-Prince, Marie Joseph blamed the United States for the violence.

"They drove out the (Aristide) Lavalas government, and nothing has changed," said Joseph, 36, who hoped to sell a bowl of cherries.

"President Bush said he'd provide security, but he's getting soldiers killed in Iraq and now he's letting people get decapitated in our country," she said.