

HAITI



Ottawa urges Canadians to avoid travel to Haiti

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OTTAWA (AFP) - Canada urged its citizens to avoid travel to Haiti unless absolutely necessary, amid a wave a deadly violence blamed on militant supporters of former president Jean Bertrand Aristide during the last two weeks.

"Canadian citizens are reminded that they should not travel to Haiti unless they have critical or compelling business or family reasons. The security situation in Haiti continues to deteriorate," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The ministry warned that violence could surge around October 15, the anniversary of Aristide's return to Haiti in 1994 after his ouster by the military, and around October 17, the anniversary of the death of independence hero Jean Jacques Dessalines.

On Wednesday, two people were reported to have been shot to death in downtown Port-au-Prince in the latest spate of attacks which shut down the capital's commercial center for 48 hours after three people were killed in street violence on

Monday. Over the past two weeks, nine Haitian police officers were killed, including three who were decapitated.

Much of the violence has been blamed on supporters of Aristide, who fled the country in February amid an armed uprising under heavy international pressure.

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