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Thousands of Fanmi Lavalas supporters demonstrate to mark the fourth anniversary of the second inauguration of Aristide as president: the police open fire

Port-au-Prince, February 8, 2005 (AHP)- Several thousand Fanmi Lavalas supporters demonstrated peacefully Monday in Port-au-Prince in observance of the fourth anniversary of the inauguration of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's second term.

The demonstrators called for the return of constitutional government, which was cut short, they said, with the forced departure of President Aristide on February 29, 2004.

They also denounced the summary executions and political persecutions directed against supporters of Mr. Aristide.

The demonstration was interrupted by a police patrol accompanied by individuals in civilian dress, known as attachés, who reportedly began shooting at the demonstrators, injuring several of them.

Soldiers from the United Nations mission who were following the demonstration then intervened, enabling the demonstrators to return to their base.

Reacting to these incidents, a spokesperson for the Lavalas activists, Samba Boukman, said that the interim government is making a mistake if it thinks that violence will persuade the activists to give up their deeply held beliefs.

"We are going to continue to struggle peacefully until constitutional government returns because Haitians have had enough of the violence and the poison of social exclusion and corruption", he said.