
Gunfire and a general state of panic grips Port-au-Prince: at least one person is killed and at least another ten are wounded

Port-au-Prince, April 5, 2005 (AHP)- Heavily armed individuals caused a panic this Tuesday in several parts of the Haitian capital, bringing activities to a standstill in all these areas and creating monstrous traffic jams.

The most severely affected areas were the downtown city center and the districts of Poste-Marchand, Sans-Fil, Lalue and Bois Verna.

At least one person was killed and more than ten were wounded.

The dead man is a taxi driver killed in the crossfire between the police and armed men.

The driver was serving the route between Nazon and the airport intersection. The injured were treated at several city hospitals including Saint-Joseph Hospital.

The Nazon and Delmas districts, which were the scenes of great violence last week, were once again affected by the day's violence.

The gunfire was heard at a time when many schools were sending their students home. Thus many frightened parents were seen running in all directions.

At most schools, the principals decide to keep the students inside the classrooms to avoid exposing them to danger.

The situation was made more complicated due to the huge traffic jams caused by the vehicles dashing about in all directions.

The police were not very present at all at the time the volleys of gunshots were fired by men dressed in black whose political or organizational affiliations were difficult to determine due to the large number of armed groups operating in the area.

The situation calmed down by the end of the afternoon, but rounds of gunfire heard not far from the National Telephone Company building in Canapé-Vert raised tensions once again and caused the streets to empty in this high traffic area.

Prime Minister Gérard Latortue inaugurated a multi-sectorial commission Monday whose mandate is to work on the question of security for the elections process leading up to and including the vote announced for later this year.

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