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## Discord grows over Latortue government

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PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

Frustration is mounting with the U.S.-backed government of interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, which has managed to alienate not only supporters of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, but even those who fought for his ouster.

Students from the public university in Port-au-Prince, who were the backbone of the street protests that helped drive Mr. Aristide from power, have launched a new campaign against the current government.

This time, however, they also are targeting members of Haiti's tiny elite, such as millionaire businessman Andre Apaid, whom they see as being closely aligned with this government.

"Now we have a new enemy," said Guy Orel, a 23-year-old anthropology student who was banging a pot in protest of rising prices outside the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism last week.

"The cost of living has gone up because the government has given the bourgeoisie tax breaks, given them too many favors, and let them step all over the poor."

The students are not alone.

Nearly 15 months after Mr. Latortue assumed power, a broad range of organizations and individuals who had banded together to fight Mr. Aristide have become critics of the current government.

They include academics, teachers, journalists, human rights observers, street merchants, peasants, workers, politicians and even some members of the elite itself.

According to a recent report by the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, "the country remains in a profound political, social and economic crisis. Security is uncertain and stability tenuous."

The government is closely aligned with hard-line sectors of the elite who favor the return of the notorious military - disbanded by Mr. Aristide in 1995 - and the government's much-touted program for national reconciliation has gone little further than rhetoric.

Meanwhile, one year after arriving in Haiti, a United Nations peacekeeping force called MINUSTAH, which now numbers more than 7,400 soldiers and police, remains woefully short of fulfilling nearly every aspect of its mandate, from disarming the nation's myriad armed groups to readying the nation for elections. The United States and other members of the United Nations are considering boosting peacekeeping forces, fearing that the entire nation-building effort could collapse altogether.

Discontent also has spread to sectors close to the government, such as the Council of the Wise, which appointed Mr. Latortue after being formed in the wake of Mr. Aristide's ouster.

The council, whose seven members are supposed to represent different sectors of Haitian society, was later mandated with serving as an advisory body to the government.

"This is a government that has not shown interest in engaging in dialogue with any sector," said Christian Rousseau, a member of the council representing the nation's public universities.