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Haiti Slum Under Siege

By Haiti Information Project ()

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Haiti Information Project (HIP)

Port au Prince, Haiti (HIP)— A slum in the capital is under siege from the Haitian National Police (HNP) following three days of violence and unrest. Heavily armed units of the HNP attempted to enter the slum of Bel Air at 9:00 p.m. last night and were met with armed resistance. Shots could be heard throughout the area for several hours as residents fought a pitched battle with the police who were forced to withdraw under heavy fire.

Bel Air is a slum in the capital of Port au Prince that has served as a launching site for recent demonstrations commemorating the thirteenth anniversary of the 1991 military coup against Jean-Bertrand Aristide. On September 30th the police opened fire on unarmed demonstrators provoking an attack against a unit of the Unite de Securite Presidentielle (U.S.P), a special security detail assigned to Interim President Boniface Alexandre. Members of the special police unit were seen firing on demonstrators and collecting bodies before masked gunmen returned fire killing three and wounding a fourth who later died in the hospital.

Residents of Bel Air claim that six persons were wounded and one killed during last night's police raid. There are no reports of casualties from the police who have yet to acknowledge the nighttime raid. Partisans of Aristide's Lavalas political party, who are calling for his return following his forced ouster on February 29th, stated they are preparing for further actions by the police and the possibility of UN troops being used against them in Bel Air.