

Thousands of Haitians protest corruption, rising living costs

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At least two people died and 14 police officers were injured Thursday, police said, as thousands of Haitians protested against rampant inflation and demanding the resignation of President Jovenel Moise on the two-year anniversary of his inauguration.

"For two years, [Jovenel](#) has promised to fill our plates. But I can't eat lies," protester Josue Louis-Jeune said in the capital Port-au-Prince, banging a metal plate with a spoon. "This president is nothing more than a liar," he said. "He's got to go."

As [Haitians](#) reel from 15 percent inflation over the past two years, a sharp drop in the value of the gourde -- the national currency -- against the [US](#) dollar has only intensified price increases on mostly imported everyday essentials.

"We can't handle this economic slump any more: we have no electricity, no security, and now flour and bread sellers have decided to close their doors due to inflation. So we've started new hunger riots," said Ulrich Louima, leading the way at the protest.

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In Port-au-Prince, several vehicles were burned by protesters who also attempted to set a gas station on fire.

Parts of the demonstration turned violent as some protesters clashed with police, who used tear gas and several times shot live bullets into the air to disperse the crowd.

National Police spokesman Gary Desrosiers said the 14 officers injured were primarily hurt by people throwing stones.

Last week, the Superior Court of Auditors published a report calling out more than a dozen former ministers and senior officials for poor economic management and the possible misappropriation of development funds loaned to the country from Venezuela since 2008.

The report also named a company that was then headed by Moise as a beneficiary of funds from a road construction project that never had a signed contract.

"Since his name is cited in the audit court report, he (Moise) must face justice, to tell the people what happened," said activist Pascale Solages, who is involved with a movement calling for transparency around the Venezuelan funds.

The demonstrations calling for an end to corruption in state institutions come on another Haitian political anniversary -- the Duvalier dictatorship ended February 7, 1986.

(AFP)

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