

Multiple gunmen killed and arrested in firefight with suspected assassins of Haitian president

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?Police officers in front of a mural of Haiti's President Jovenel Moise after he was shot dead by gunmen in Port-au-Prince

Port-au-Prince, July 8 (RHC)-- Haiti's national police have arrested multiple men suspected of assassinating President Jovenel Moise, the government announced, adding that a gun battle with the alleged perpetrators lasted several hours.

The suspected assassins were arrested "shortly before 6 pm" local time on Wednesday, Haiti's minister of communication Frantz Exantus announced on Twitter.

While Exantus did not identify any of the alleged perpetrators or say how many had been brought into custody, Haiti's national police chief later told a press conference that two "mercenaries" had been captured, while four others were killed in a firefight. He added that three police officers who were briefly taken hostage by the purported assassins had been freed, though still vowed to kill or detain the

remaining gunmen.

Unconfirmed footage alleged to show the armed standoff has circulated on social media, in which barrages of gunfire are heard as a column of black smoke appears to rise from a building in the distance.

Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph's office said earlier that his administration was ensuring the "continuity of the state" following the "villainous assassination," later adding that the prime minister had been in touch with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Unknown gunmen, allegedly announcing they were agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, the DEA, raided Moise's residence on Wednesday morning at 1 a.m. and gunned him down. Moise's wife Martine was also injured in the attack, and was flown to a Florida hospital in critical condition. She had earlier been reported as dead on arrival, but apparently survived the attack.

The Haitian government said that the assassins "spoke English and Spanish," declaring a state of siege and launching a manhunt after the perpetrators.

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