

Haiti requests U.S. troops on the ground following president's assassination

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Haiti says Send in the Marines!!

Port-au-Prince, July 10 (RHC)-- Haiti has requested that the United Nations and the United States send troops to help secure key infrastructure after the assassination of President Jovenel Moise plunged the country into political turmoil, according to several reports.

A letter from the prime minister's office to the United Nations dated Wednesday, July 7th -- the day Moise was shot dead in his home -- said the aim was "to support the efforts of the national police aiming to reestablish security and public order in the whole territory". The letter was reviewed by the Reuters news agency.

The 15-member UN Security Council will now meet to authorise a deployment of UN peacekeepers or police to Haiti.

In an interview with AFP news agency, elections minister Mathias Pierre admitted that he made the request when speaking on the phone with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken. At the same time, he asked for UN troops as well.

Observers note that the timing of this request for U.S. troops was critical. It came just hours after the murder of the Haitian president and while talking with the top diplomatic official of the U.S. government.

The news website, Military.com is also reporting that the United States has confirmed the request for boots on the ground. "The Haitian government has requested security and investigative assistance, and we remain in regular contact with Haitian officials to discuss how the United States can assist," Pentagon spokesman Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Ken Hoffman told the website in an e-mail.

The assassination of Moise by a hit squad of gunmen in the early hours of Wednesday morning at his home in Port-au-Prince pitched Haiti deeper into a political crisis, which may worsen growing hunger, gang violence and a COVID-19 outbreak.

So far, the U.S. said it is dispatching senior officials from the FBI and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as soon as possible to assess the situation and see how best they can assist, the White House said.

Two U.S. law enforcement sources, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss an active investigation, told Reuters that agencies were looking into the U.S. connections to the killing given the detention of two U.S. citizens.

A State Department spokesperson said: "We are aware of the arrest of two US citizens in Haiti and are monitoring the situation closely. Due to privacy considerations, we have no further comment."

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