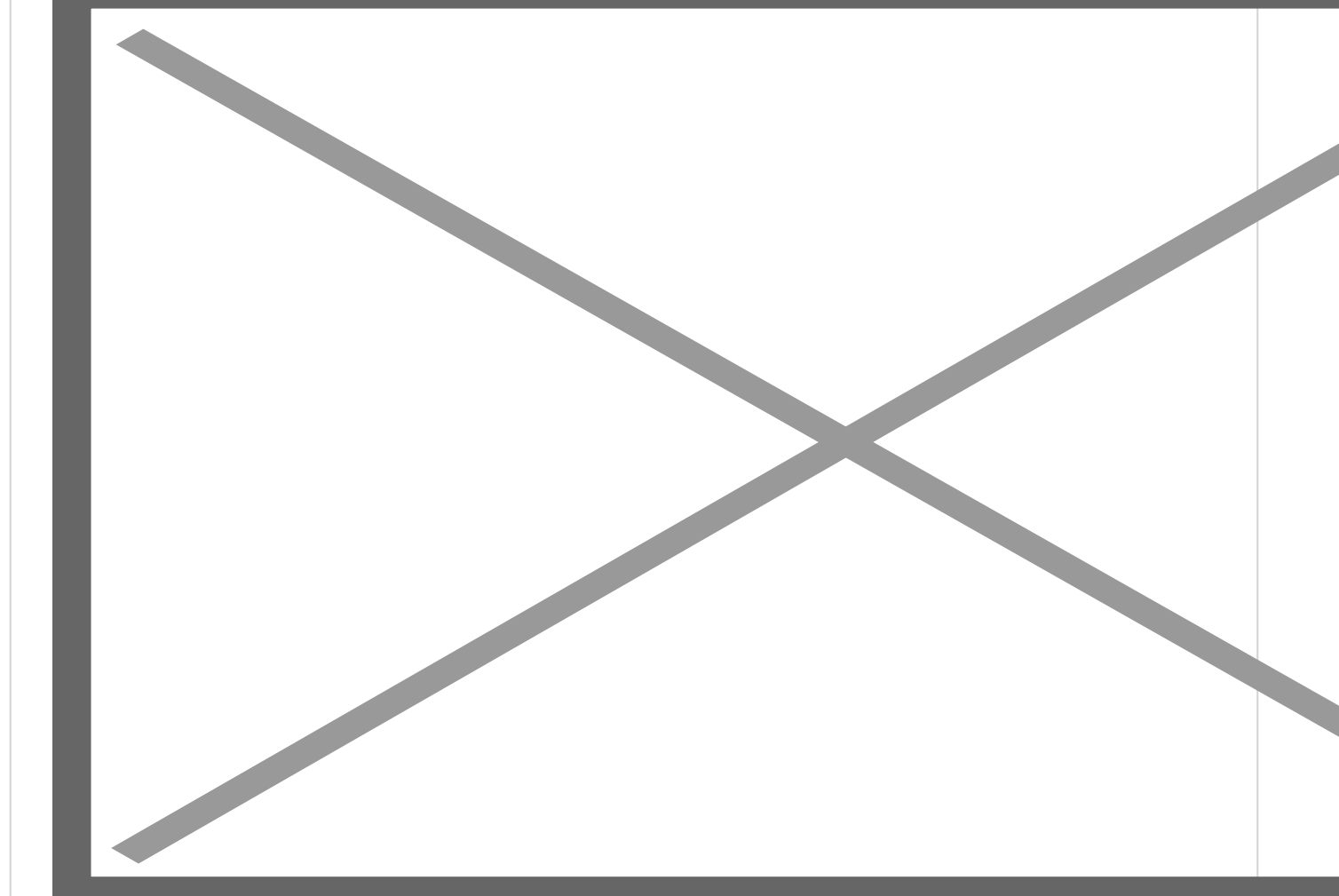


Seven people shot dead at church rally in Haiti

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Port-au-Prince, August 29 (RHC)-- In Haiti, at least seven people were killed after gang members armed with machine guns opened fire on protesters in Canaan. The rally against gang violence had been organized by a local church.

Canaan is a makeshift town near the capital Port-au-Prince built by people who lost their homes in Haiti's devastating 2010 earthquake.

Survivors of Sunday's attack placed blame on the pastor who organized the rally and then continued the march even as the shooting broke out. One organizer, François Vicner, told reporters: "They opened fire on us with all sorts of guns. The pastor's followers really believed what he told them. He said they were bulletproof, that those who were wounded had no faith. I was there. I saw everything with my own eyes. They were firing, and the pastor was walking."

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians have been internally displaced or forced to migrate due to the worsening violence. The United Nations reported some 8,700 residents have been forced to take shelter in a crowded sports center in Port-au-Prince.

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