

# Washington has not ruled out sending troops to Haiti

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The Biden administration appears to be attempting to cobble together a national unity regime to replace assassinated president Jovenel Moïse in the hopes of staving off mass social unrest in Haiti.

US President Joe Biden told reporters in Washington Monday that “Political leaders need to come together” in Haiti. He added, “The US stands ready to continue to provide assistance and I’ll have more for you as we move on,” providing no details on US plans.

The White House reported Monday that a US delegation of State Department, Homeland Security, FBI and National Security Council officials dispatched to Port-au-Prince met jointly with acting Prime Minister Claude Joseph, Prime Minister-Designate Ariel Henry and Senate President Joseph Lambert, each of whom has claimed to be the legitimate head of state in the wake of the July 7 assassination of Moïse.

The lightning trip by the US delegation lasted less than 24 hours, with the American officials arriving in Port-au-Prince on Sunday and returning to Washington to brief Biden on Monday.

The White House statement said that the visiting US security delegation discussed with Haitian officials the “security of critical infrastructure,” an oblique reference to acting Prime Minister Joseph’s panicked call for the US to send troops to the Caribbean-island nation.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Mathias Pierre, Haiti’s elections minister, expanded on Joseph’s request: “What do we do? Do we let the country fall into chaos? Private properties destroyed? People killed after the assassination of the president? Or, as a government, do we prevent? We’re not asking for the occupation of the country. We’re asking for small troops to assist and help us. ... As long as we are weak, I think we will need our neighbors.”

Haiti was occupied by US Marines for the first time beginning in 1915. The pretext for President Woodrow Wilson sending troops into Haiti then was the last assassination of a Haitian president—Vilbrun Guillaume Sam—and the supposed threat of anarchy. The Marines stayed for nearly two decades, brutally suppressing a nationalist insurgency and imposing in their stead the repressive Garde d’Haiti, which in turn provided the foundation for the savage US-backed Duvalier dictatorship, which ruled the country for another 30 years.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that the Haitian officials’ request for a US military intervention was “still under review” and had not been ruled out.

A spokesman for the United Nations also stated that Joseph’s request for a return of UN “peacekeepers” was under review. The last UN force was sent into Haiti under Brazilian command in 2004 with the express purpose of preventing a return to power of elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was ousted in a US-backed coup. The force was withdrawn in 2017 after years of repression and spreading a devastating cholera epidemic in the Haitian population.

Believed by many to have come to office through a rigged election, having ruled by decree after effectively shutting down the legislature and suppressing the courts and over-staying his constitutional term, which ended in February, Moïse was widely hated in Haiti. Nonetheless, there are fears both within the venal Haitian ruling elite and in Washington that his death could open up a political vacuum leading to revolt from below in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

The facts of Moïse’s assassination early last Wednesday morning remain far from clear. He was

riddled with 12 bullets by his assassins in an attack on his villa in the wealthy Petionville suburb of the capital Port-au-Prince.

In the latest development, the Haitian police announced the arrest of 63-year-old Christian Emmanuel Sanon, a failed businessman and evangelical Christian preacher who has lived in Florida for decades. He is accused of being the middleman between a hit squad comprised of Colombian mercenaries and a pair of as yet unnamed masterminds behind the political murder. Acquaintances of Sanon interviewed by the media in Florida described him as a most unlikely organizer of an assassination.

According to the official version of the Haitian police, the assassination was carried out by Colombian mercenaries, 18 of whom are detained, with three others killed. Two US citizens of Haitian descent are also charged, one of whom, James Solages, was a former head of security at the Canadian embassy in Port-au-Prince and a driver and bodyguard for the actor Sean Penn's charitable pursuits in Haiti.

While the Colombian mercenaries included retired military personnel implicated in bloody crimes in the dirty counterinsurgency war in Colombia, relatives insisted that they had been hired to provide security, not carry out an assassination. They were contracted by a Florida-based security firm called CTU, headed by a Venezuelan national.

Steven Benoit, an opposition Haitian senator, told reporters in Haiti that Moïse "was assassinated by his security agents," adding, "It was not the Colombians."

Not a single member of Moïse's security detail suffered a scratch in the assassination, and questions have been raised as to how the Colombian mercenaries could have gained access to Moïse's villa, which can be reached only by one road that is guarded by police. Moreover, most of the Colombians were rounded up at their hotels after the assassination, without any resistance or apparent plan to leave the country.

The US security personnel detailed to the investigation into Moïse's murder will no doubt aid in whatever coverup is required to protect those in Haiti's ruling elite who orchestrated the killing to settle accounts within the corrupt dealings between the government and business interests.

Social media posts have signaled plans for protests this week against the attempt by the corrupt politicians

to consolidate a new illegitimate regime to replace that headed by Moïse. The Haitian police have warned that they will use whatever force necessary to enforce a state of siege declared by acting Prime Minister Joseph.



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