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Haiti's prime minister resigns as law and order collapses

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Ariel Henry

By Will Grant, Central America correspondent & James Gregory

BBC News

Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry has agreed to resign following weeks of mounting pressure and increasing violence in the impoverished country.

Without the support of either the US state department or his neighbours, it was clear that Mr Henry had no alternative but to stand down.

Mr Henry has expressed a wish to return to Haiti but the security situation has to improve before he is able to do so, according to the US which was at the talks in Kingston on Monday.

A senior US official said Mr Henry had first made the decision to step down on Friday but he had waited for an official announcement so talks could take place.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken committed a further \$100m (£78m) to the 1,000-strong UN-backed security force Kenya is expected to lead in Haiti.

The proposed US contribution to the security force now stands at \$300m following Mr Blinken's announcement, with a further \$33m allocated for humanitarian aid.

Speaking following the meeting, chairman of the Caricom group and Guyana President Irfaan Ali said: "We acknowledge his resignation upon the establishment of a transitional presidential council and naming of an interim prime minister."

President Ali said the transitional presidential council would have two observers and seven voting members, including representatives from several coalitions, the private sector and civil society, and one religious leader.

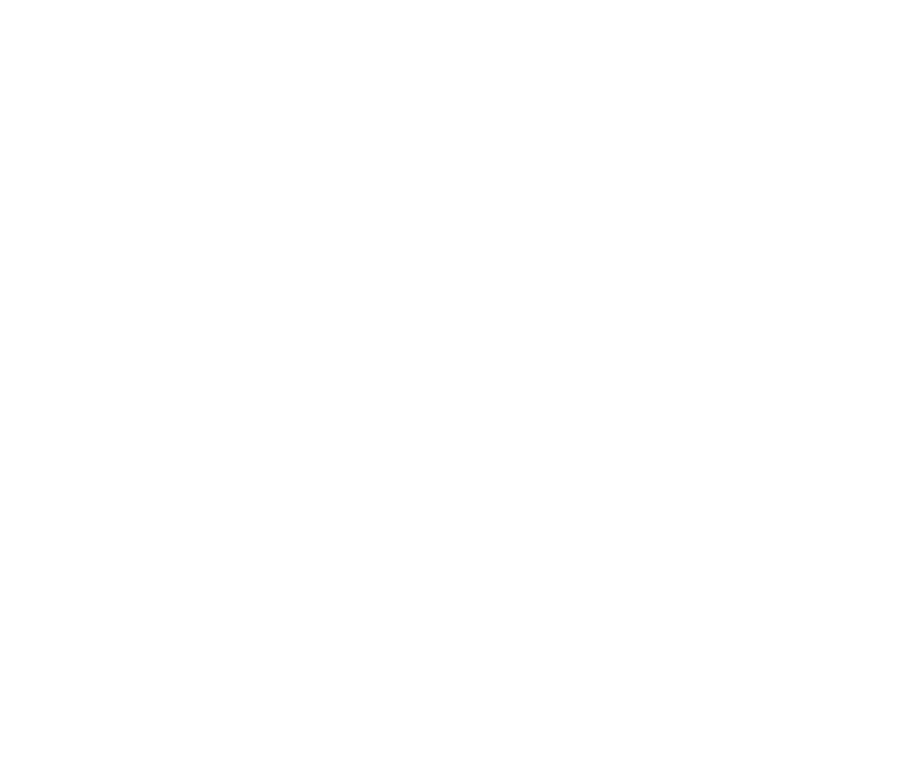
The council has been mandated to "swiftly" appoint an interim prime minister, he said, adding that anyone intending to run in Haiti's next elections will not be able to participate.

It is hoped the council will pave the way for the first elections in Haiti since 2016.

Haiti: The basics

- The Caribbean country shares a border with the Dominican Republic and has an estimated population of 11.5 million
- It has a land area of 27,800 sq km, which is slightly smaller than Belgium and about the same size as the US state of Maryland
- Chronic instability, dictatorships and natural disasters in recent decades have left Haiti the poorest nation in the Americas
- An earthquake in 2010 killed more than 200,000 people and caused extensive damage to infrastructure and the economy
- A UN peacekeeping force was put in place in 2004 to help stabilise the country and only withdrew in 2017
- In July 2021, President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated by unidentified gunmen in Port-au-Prince. Amid political stalemate, the country continues to be wracked by unrest and gang violence

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