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NEWS FLASH
HAITI -- POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Amnesty International is concerned about reports of politically-motivated violent street demonstrations by individuals said to be calling for, among other demands, the resignation of the Provisional Electoral Council in Haiti. At least six people are reported to have been killed, and more injured.

Members of an opposition party reported that they were attacked by a group of armed men as they handed out pamphlets in Port-au-Prince on 29 March. On 28 March, outside the capital, a candidate from another opposition party and his wife were reportedly shot dead by unidentified assailants in what their party leaders claimed were political killings. On 27 March demonstrators, some of whom claimed ties to the Fanmi Lavalas party, set fire to tyres at barricades around Port-au-Prince. The central market was burnt and four people were reportedly killed.

Amnesty International reminds the Haitian government of its obligations under domestic and international law to ensure safety for its citizens. The organization is concerned about reports of insufficient response by police during the disturbances. It calls on the Haitian National Police to carry out its duty to safeguard public security in a professional and impartial manner.

The organization urges leaders of political parties to ensure that they and their partisans refrain from using violence in pursuing their political objectives, so that the electoral process currently underway can proceed in an open, transparent and peaceful manner.

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