

Haiti Power Void Extends, UN Warns of 'Institutional Vacuum'



Port-au-Prince, June 17 (RHC)-- Haiti's interim President Jocelerme Privert has called on the National Assembly to make "a decision" in the face of his transitional government's 120-day mandate expiring, while the United Nations warned of the risk of an impending "institutional vacuum" in the country if steps are not taken to manage looming uncertainty.

"I eagerly await the National Assembly meeting and taking a decision," Privert said a day after his term expired. But despite the country being launched into a new period of political limbo, Privert said the "situation is under control" and that "the government is functional."

Meanwhile, the U.N. and its representatives in Haiti raised concern in a statement Wednesday that "no measures have been taken to ensure institutional continuity" despite the expiry of the transitional government's temporary term. The statement warned of the need to avoid an "institutional vacuum" and reiterated calls for the National Assembly to take action.

Parliament chose Privert as a temporary caretaker for the country's top office in February to help transition the country and fill the power void created when authorities cancelled January's planned presidential runoff vote due to allegations of fraud, forcing former President Michel Martelly to leave office without a successor.

The plan was for the transitional government to organize new elections by April, in time for an elected president to office in May. But the four-month mandate has already come to an end, and elections are not yet on the table, extending the precarious and shuffling uncertainty of who holds power in the country.

It remains unclear whether Privert will continue in the role of interim president. Leaders in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies have called on the population to "remain calm until the National Assembly meets to take the necessary measures."

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