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John Neagle

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Haiti: 24-hour Nationwide Strike To Protest Austerity Policy

by John Neagle
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On Sept. 27, nearly all businesses were closed and public transportation paralyzed in Port-au-Prince and in 12 other towns and cities to protest government austerity policies implemented last month. The 24-hour strike was called by 33 organizations representing farmers, workers, opposition parties and others. The strike appeared to be supported by both management and employees. Opposition leader Hubert De Ronceray told the AP, "For the first time since (Duvalier's departure) everybody has unanimously rejected the socio-economic policy of the government." The austerity measures included price hikes for some staple foodstuffs, a 30% increase in import tariffs and a lowering of the ceiling on taxable businesses to include those that earn as little as $25,000 per year. Unions are demanding that the government of Gen. Prosper Avril cancel a recent $27 million loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund under which Haiti is required to implement austerity policies. (Basic data from AP, AFP, 09/27/89)

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