

## Haiti on verge of political crisis

by UPI

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Haiti hangs on the verge of political crisis amid concerns over President Rene Preval's credibility and constitutional reforms. Haiti enjoyed 18 months of relative calm before a political firestorm erupted over delays in senate elections, electoral investigations and speculation concerning the country's 20-year-old constitution, the Miami Herald reported Friday. No date has been set to replace 11 senators whose terms expire Jan. 14 and Preval said he wants to replace the current Provisional Electoral Council following allegations of corruption. The Herald quoted an anonymous source as saying, "This is a distraction that Haiti can ill afford at this point." Preval said the constitution is contributing to the political crisis because it focuses too heavily on preventing the emergence of a dictatorship. "In 20 years, we've never had political stability because we were always fighting against the dictator," Preval said. He later said, "Today, we are creating a government where there is representation by everyone in the parliament, and this has provided political stability." Critics claim Preval is "manufacturing a crisis" as a diversion. The Herald quoted an opposition leader saying, "This government lacks credibility, and they will lose even more credibility if they continue to pursue this."

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