

A prominent attorney who has brought corruption cases against Haiti's government has been detained, prompting protests from politicians and demonstrations in the streets.

As Andre Michel waited for a hearing before a judge on Wednesday, supporters broke into the office where he was being held and pushed him past police and security guards to another office near the courthouse.

Authorities did not immediately react to the supporters' actions, and reporters did not have access to the location where Michel was taken.

While prosecutors had not said publicly why Michel was arrested, Marie Yolene Gilles, assistant program director of the National Human Rights Defense Network, said she saw the police record against Michel and said he was stopped because of a minor traffic violation.

The detention of the prominent attorney prompted Senate President Simon Dieuseul Desras, a critic of President Michel Martelly, to call for an emergency session of legislators to discuss the arrest.

Dozens of the attorney's supporters shut down a couple blocks in downtown Port-au-Prince on Wednesday as they set fire to barricades and threw rocks at passing motorists.

Supporters also showed up at the courthouse and demanded the president's resignation as riot police stood guard.

Michel is one of the few attorneys in Haiti who takes on legal cases critical of Martelly's government, and he also has taken a case involving a student fatally shot by police. Michel also is sympathetic to former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

A Martelly spokesman could not be reached for comment, and police have declined to comment on the case.