



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti
Bureau des Avocats Internationaux

Contacts: Alison Roh Park, **CCR**, apark@ccrjustice.org (212) 614-6480; Nicole Phillips, **IJDH**, Nicole@ijdh.org; (510) 715-2855 / 011 (509) 3419 0888; Mario Joseph, **BAI**, 011 (509) 3701 9879; Kathleen Bergin, **You.Me.We.**, kbergin@ymwglobal.org, (857) 222-6175; Jennifer Goldsmith (jg5900a@student.american.edu) and Laura Karr (laura.p.karr@gmail.com), **American University Washington College of Law**, (202) 274-4147

Haiti Government Directed to Stop Evictions without Safe Shelter for Earthquake Survivors

Inter-American Commission Issues Directive in Response to Rights Groups' Request

November 18, 2010, Washington, D.C. – This week, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) directed the Haitian State to stop evicting earthquake survivors from displacement camps unless they are provided safe and adequate shelter. The directive is in response to a formal request filed by human rights advocates who testified in October about an epidemic of forced evictions from the camps. The request was filed November 2, 2010 by the **Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)**, **Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH)**, **Bureau des Avocats Internationaux**, the **International Human Rights Law Clinic at American University's Washington College of Law**, and the disaster law center **You.Me.We.**

"We want the hundreds of thousands of Haitians threatened with forced evictions to know that these evictions violate Haitian and International law and that they are entitled to human rights protections," said **Nicole Phillips, IJDH Staff Attorney** and Assistant Director for Haiti Programs at the University of San Francisco School of Law. "We hope that the International Community will also respect these recommendations and assure that their actions do not directly or indirectly support unlawful evictions." Ms. Phillips said that the recommendations would be translated into Haiti Creole and released at a **Port-au-Prince press conference on November 22, 2010.**

The IACHR calls on the Haitian State to implement a moratorium on forced evictions; to provide remedies to camp residents who are forcibly evicted; to provide adequate alternative shelter to people forced out of a camp; to train the police and other government agents on human rights standards that prohibit forced evictions; to protect people inside the camps, particularly women and children, from violence and other abuses that are often associated with unlawful eviction; and to ensure that international organizations have access to the camps.

"This is a significant victory for the people of Haiti," says **Kathleen Bergin, You.Me.We. Director**, and law professor at South Texas College of Law. "Forced evictions pose a grave risk of serious and irreparable harm when displaced people have nowhere else to go, especially now

in light of a growing cholera epidemic. We fully expect the Government of Haiti to respect its obligations under international law and comply with the Commission's directive.”

“The directives are a modest but important step forward by the international community,” said **CCR legal director William Quigley**. “There are over a million women, men and children who are homeless in Haiti right now, safe housing is just one human rights protection that is critically needed right now.”

Data from international monitoring agencies indicates that nearly 40,000 camp residents have been evicted, and another 144,000 face an on-going threat of eviction. According to the group's filing, entire settlements have been destroyed and the police have terrorized and beaten residents who refuse to vacate their camps. In many cases, people in camps targeted for eviction are being denied food, clean water and medical care.

Said Jennifer Goldsmith and Laura Karr of the International Human Rights Law Clinic at American University Washington College of Law, “The Commission’s directive to the Haitian government to abide by international law provides an important impetus to the government to increase its efforts to craft long-term housing solutions that are consistent with international human rights standards.”

“The Commission’s directive is a small but significant victory for Haitian people in stopping forced evictions,” said **BAI managing attorney Mario Joseph**. “We hope that the Government of Haiti will adopt these comprehensive recommendations immediately and issue a moratorium on forced evictions.”

You.Me.We. is a disaster response law and policy center that defends human rights in the aftermath of sudden on-set disasters. One of the few human rights law organizations that focuses on disaster law, You.Me.We. is engaged in domestic and international advocacy on behalf of displaced people across the globe, including New Orleans, Haiti, Turkey and Pakistan.

CCR is dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Founded in 1966 by attorneys who represented civil rights movements in the South, CCR is a non-profit legal and educational organization committed to the creative use of law as a positive force for social change.

IJDH strives to work with the people of Haiti in their non-violent struggle for the consolidation of constitutional democracy, justice and human rights, by distributing objective and accurate information on human rights conditions in Haiti, pursuing legal cases, and cooperating with human rights and solidarity groups in Haiti and abroad.

BAI in Port-au-Prince, has helped victims prosecute human rights cases, trained Haitian lawyers and spoken out on justice issues since 1995. The BAI used to receive most of its support from Haiti’s constitutional governments, but since February 2004, it has received most of its support from the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), and no support from any government or political organization.

IHRLC at American University's Washington College of Law offers student attorneys the opportunity to represent individuals, families or organizations alleging violations of recognized or developing human rights norms before international and domestic judicial bodies. Student attorneys also work on projects to influence U.S. law and policy on human rights issues.