

Hello Friend,

**Join the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) as we monitor the trial of Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, former death-squad leader and known human rights abuser, who will be going to trial for grand larceny and mortgage fraud from Tuesday, May 6, 2008. The trial is expected to last until the end of May 2008 in Brooklyn, NY.**

Toto Constant has spent the past 14 years – in Haiti and in the U.S. – trying to evade justice, whether it be for rape and other torture of the Haitian people or swindling money out of people and banks in New York. He was a leader of FRAPH (Revolutionary Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti) during Haiti's 1991—1994 military rule, which claimed the lives of an estimated 5000 Haitians and orchestrated a systematic campaign of rape and other torture, arson and executions against the residents of the poorest communities in Haiti.

Mr. Constant fled Haiti to the U.S. in 1994 when a Haitian court issued a warrant for his arrest for murder and torture. From 1996 until his arrest for mortgage fraud in 2006, Constant has enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle in Queens, NY, despite international outcry and extradition requests from Haiti for his crimes against humanity.

In 2000, Constant was convicted *in absentia* by a Haitian court for having command responsibility over the perpetrators of the infamous 1994 "Raboteau massacre." Shortly afterwards, there was a military coup and in 2004, CCR and the Center for Justice & Accountability (CJA) filed a civil suit against Mr. Constant in New York on behalf of three women who survived FRAPH's campaign of violence against women, including rape. In 2006, the court found Constant liable for torture, including rape, attempted extrajudicial killing, and crimes against humanity. He has been ordered to pay \$19 million dollars in damages, which he is currently trying to get out of paying.

We would like you to help us monitor his upcoming trial for mortgage fraud for the economic crimes against the people of New York. Trial is likely to last for one month, and we are looking for people who are willing to take a day to sit in the courtroom for a day, take notes, and report back to us on any developments. We will be collecting stories on these developments and will publish any important feedback you provide to us on CCR's website and keep our colleagues in the Haitian and Haitian-American human rights community informed of developments in the trial.

Last spring, after receiving information from Haitian and U.S. human rights attorneys and activists about Constant's past leadership of the FRAPH, Judge Abraham Gerges set aside the original plea bargain for Constant, over the objections of the Department of Homeland Security, which was urging Constant's immediate deportation to Haiti. A coalition, including Haitian human rights attorney Mario Joseph, CCR, CJA, the International Support Haiti Network and the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, also provided information that if Constant were returned to Haiti, there was no system to adequately try him or prevent him from terrorizing the population at this time because of the destruction of the justice and prison system by the latest military rule.

**Please look through your calendar and let us know if you can donate a day or more to this important initiative. The trial will be held at the Supreme Court of New York at 320 Jay Street, Room 1721 in downtown Brooklyn, starting May 6 from 9:30am – 5:00pm, and continuing Monday through Friday from 9:30am – 5:00pm until the end of May.**

Please contact Chaneen Cummings at [ccummings@ccrjustice.org](mailto:ccummings@ccrjustice.org) or (212) 614-6421 if you would like to sign up to monitor the trial, have additional questions, or need additional information.

Thank you,

The Center for Constitutional Rights