



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti

IJDH Quarterly Newsletter
March 2010



Responding to Haiti's Devastation:
Advocating for the Human Rights of Earthquake Victims

Welcome

Keeping Our Supporters Informed
Welcome to IJDH's first quarterly newsletter!

Several of our supporters and collaborators expressed a desire to hear from us more frequently. We hope that these newsletters, and other communication improvements, will allow you to better connect with our work and find information about human rights in Haiti. Check out our [new website](#) and, if you haven't done so already, [sign up](#) for our mailing list to receive our [Half-Hour for Haiti Action Alerts](#) and other correspondence. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Updates from Haiti

Advocating on Behalf of Earthquake Victims
The BAI's network of grassroots organizations has permitted us to play a productive role in disaster response to the earthquake.

The BAI has helped connect medical providers with equipment, supplies and facilities, and distributed assistance directly to victims. The BAI's Mario Joseph trained grassroots women leaders to conduct a census of over 4,000 earthquake victims to facilitate BAI's aid distribution and provide data to international organizations. The office also hosted [a medical team from New York](#), which used the BAI office as a clinic and living quarters, and is currently hosting [a legal/medical team from San Francisco](#), which is using the office to assist

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A student, with the [Haitian Education and Leadership Program](#), surveys a family living in a tent encampment in

earthquake victims fill out applications for temporary entry into the U.S. to join their families or obtain necessary medical care. BAI lawyers have advocated on behalf of voodoo practitioners persecuted in the aftermath of the disaster.

We will continue to look for concrete ways to enforce the basic rights of earthquake victims and, more importantly, to empower communities to advocate for themselves.

Port-au-Prince as part of a longitudinal study coordinated by the Lawyers'

Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network

Calling for a Human Rights Based Approach
On January 17, 2010, IJDH and BAI launched the Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network (LERN) - now coordinating over 320 lawyers, law professors and law students - to implement a legal response to the earthquake in Haiti. LERN employs a human rights-based approach to advocate for the victims of the earthquake and reduce Haiti's vulnerability to future natural, political and economic stresses.

LERN lawyers are busy preparing to testify before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in Washington, DC on March 23 outlining donor states' human rights obligations when providing assistance to Haiti. Click here to read more about this and other projects including advocating for the rights of internally displaced people and urging for more generous humanitarian parole in the U.S.

Program Updates

Despite Setbacks Our Work Moves Forward

Health & Human Rights in Prisons Project (HHRPP)
Decreased prison capacity in the capital coupled with the court system's current inability to process detainees' cases, will force prisoners into the already overcrowded remaining prisons, including the HHRPP prisons in Hinche, St. Marc and Mirebalais. It will therefore be more important than ever for HHRPP to provide medical services in the prisons and reduce the prison population through effective legal representation and public advocacy.

Although project participants are currently conducting less work on HHRPP, all are committed to keeping this project moving. Since the earthquake, BAI Attorney Ouvens Jean Louis has assisted several unjustly held prisoners obtain release in Hinche and return to their families, which have undoubtedly grown as a result of the urban exodus after the earthquake.

Read more about the HHRPP here.

Human Right to Education Project (HREP)

With all of the schools in Port-au-Prince still closed due to earthquake damage, tens of thousands of children are left without access to education, not including the 50 percent of Haitian children excluded from the system before the catastrophe. The Palais de Justice, which housed the trial and appellate courts in the capital, was completely destroyed delaying the filing of our complaint on behalf of these children. As Haiti develops its plan for rebuilding, we will work to ensure that the right to education, especially for the internally displaced, is respected.

You can follow the HREP [here](#).

Haiti Asylum Information Project (HAIP)

IJDH's [new website](#), launched last month, will allow us to continue to update and expand our web-based resources for asylum applicants and their advocates. Since the earthquake, we have worked with law students from UC Hastings and Georgetown to update our [Haiti Asylum Law Spreadsheet](#) and [Country Conditions Information](#) pages.

Find resources and conduct research [here](#).

Staff Update

Expansions Increase Our Effectiveness

We are excited to welcome the newest member of our staff, Communications Associate [Lily Friedman](#). Thanks to our generous supporters, we have been able to increase our staff in Haiti and the U.S., which has already shown dividends. We are also thrilled to welcome [Legal Intern Sarah Dougherty](#) who will be with us full-time until May.

Thank You to Our Supporters

Your Generosity Keeps Us Fighting for Justice

We would like to extend a special thank you to all of our [supporters](#) and [volunteers](#). Your generosity has allowed us to expand our staff in Haiti and the US increasing our effectiveness, provide direct assistance and supplies to earthquake victims easing suffering, support fact-finding delegations investigating human rights violations to support international advocacy, and upgrade our website improving our communication. Simply put, our work would not be possible without you.

*IJDH Volunteers 2010

Dawn Aberg
Audrey Bethel
Adriana Camarena
Samantha Diamond

Earthquake Response Network (LERN) that tracks aid distribution.



Mario Joseph conducts a training with grassroots groups at the BAI in survey administration to conduct a needs assessment and then use the data to advocate for assistance.



Doctor with NY Medics treats earthquake victim in BAI courtyard.

Take Action

You Can Make a Difference

Consider [making a donation](#) to IJDH. We will work to make sure your generosity is turned into tangible justice for Haiti's poor, the hardest hit victims of the recent earthquake. Read [what they're saying about us](#) on Philanthropedia.

Sign up for our [Half Hour for Haiti Action Alerts](#) and spend 30 minutes a month writing to your representative, signing meaningful petitions or reading a thought provoking article.

[Volunteer](#) on a project: Forward this to a friend, post about our work on

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Colleen McLaughlin
Max Monclair
Regine Monde
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Everyone who has joined the Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network - too many to name here!

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social networking sites, [attend](#) or [even host](#) an event, learn more about our work by [clicking here!](#)

Upcoming Events

IJDH and BAI Come to a City Near You, Will You Join us?

San Francisco, CA

- March 17, Brian Concannon speaks at the [California Institute of Integral Studies](#)
- March 19, Brian Concannon and Mario Joseph speak at [UC Hastings College of the Law](#)
- March 20, Mario Joseph speaks at [Together for Haiti Fundraiser](#)

Washington, DC

- March 23, IJDH and BAI team up with PIH, the RFK Center and NYU for [General Hearing Before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights](#)
- We may have another public event in DC, check [our calendar](#) for updates!

Brooklyn, NY

- March 26, Come Join IJDH and BAI for our [Art Auction and Benefit \(21+\)](#)

Middlebury, VT

- March 29, Brian Concannon speaks at [Middlebury College](#)

*See [our website here](#) for additional details as they become available.

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