



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti
Bureau des Avocats Internationaux

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**Report Issued on the Role of the International Community
in Ensuring Fair Elections in Haiti**

A comprehensive report released today outlines the history of disputed elections in Haiti, the need for fair and inclusive elections to take place this year, and the obstacles faced in conducting such elections.

(San Francisco, CA, July 6, 2010) In response to Haitian President Rene Prével's recent rejection of recommendations from the U.S. Senate on holding fair elections, the [Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti](#) (IJDH) has issued a report entitled "[The International Community Should Pressure the Haitian Government for Prompt and Fair Elections.](#)" The report contains concrete recommendations on what steps the international community should take to ensure that elections in Haiti are fair, inclusive and constitutional. It analyzes in depth the constitutional provisions that have to do with election law, and explains the mechanics of elections in Haiti. In particular, the report calls for reform of Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (CEP), the body responsible for organizing elections.

The CEP was named by President Rene Preval from lists of candidates provided to him by selected sectors of Haitian society. It has been the target of criticism from across Haiti's political spectrum since November 2009, when it ordered the exclusion of 14 political parties from elections without providing adequate legal justification. More recently, CEP members have been involved in corruption scandals and internal disputes.

The IJDH report details how the CEP's exclusion of political parties violated voters' rights guaranteed by both domestic and international law. Despite the controversy surrounding the CEP, Haitian President Preval stated last week that he would not comply with a recommendation from U.S. Senator Richard Lugar to reconstruct the CEP and allow the participation of *Fanmi Lavalas*, Haiti's largest political party. IJDH's sister organization in Haiti, the *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI), has worked with excluded parties from across the political spectrum. "The exclusions are arbitrary and unconstitutional," said Mario Joseph, Av., Managing Attorney of the BAI, "Without inclusive elections, Haiti cannot move forward. This report clarifies the need for fair elections and the steps that must be taken to meet that need."

The IJDH report emphasizes the stake that the international community holds in Haiti's elections, and in ensuring that such unlawful elections do not occur again. "The international community must ensure fair elections in Haiti in order to protect its investment in Haiti's reconstruction," said IJDH Staff Attorney Nicole Phillips, Esq. "In the wake of the earthquake, there must be political accountability for the expenditure of relief funds." Brian Concannon, Esq., Director and co-Founder of IJDH, added that exclusive elections "threaten not only Haiti's democracy and stability, but billions in foreign investments financed by taxpayers in the United States and elsewhere." The report provides detailed information and analysis on how to best protect the rights of Haitian voters and the investment of the international community in "building Haiti back better."

About the Organizations

The [Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti](#) (IJDH), established in 2004, fights for human rights and justice in Haiti and for fair and just treatment of Haitians in the United States.

The [Bureau des Avocats Internationaux](#) (BAI), Haiti's leading human rights law firm, has helped poor Haitians fight for justice since 1995.

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