

“WE’VE BEEN FORGOTTEN”

CONDITIONS IN HAITI’S DISPLACEMENT CAMPS EIGHT MONTHS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Camp Conditions

More than eight months after the January 12, 2010 earthquake, at least 1.3 million Haitians continue to live in makeshift camps in and around Port-au-Prince.¹ Two surveys conducted by a coalition of human rights organizations – the LAMP for Haiti Foundation (LAMP), the *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI), the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), and the Center for Law & Global Justice at the University of San Francisco School of Law – found living conditions in the camps continue to violate basic human dignity.

Measuring Human Rights

In February 2010, an initial survey of 90 families chosen at random from six camps indicated that the overwhelming majority lacked adequate access to shelter, water, food, sanitation, and medical care. The resulting report, *Neglect in the Encampments: Haiti’s Second-Wave Humanitarian Disaster*, was presented to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in March 2010.²

In July 2010, a second survey compared how living conditions in the camps measured against human rights standards set forth under the Haitian Constitution and international law on the treatment of displaced persons. Fifty-two of the original 90 families were located and interviewed.

Survey Results

Evidence of the following human rights violations were found:



- **Right to Food.** 75% of families had someone go an entire day without eating in the past week and over 50% indicated that their children did not eat for an entire day
- **Right to Clean Water.** 44% of families primarily drank untreated water
- **Right to a Sanitary Environment.** 27% of families defecated in a container, a plastic bag, or on open ground in the camps
- **Right to Housing.** 78% of families lived without enclosed shelter
- **Right to Health.** There were 245 independently listed health problems among 45 families
- **Right to Protection From and During Displacement.** 94% of families felt they could not return home while 48% had been threatened with forced eviction since the earthquake



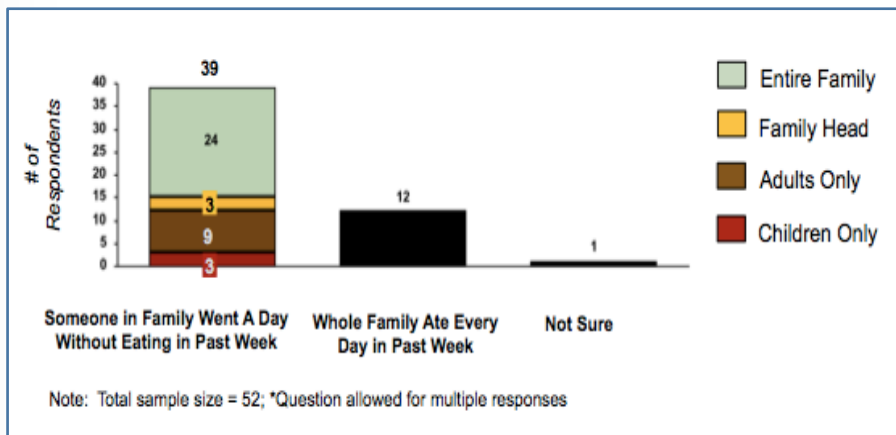
¹ *Haiti Droit au logement: Sit-in de personnes déplacées pour réclamer des logements décentes*, AlterPresse, September 10, 2010, available at <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MCOI-898G9V?OpenDocument&RSS20=02>.

² Available at <http://ijdh.org/archives/10671>.

In 3 out of 4 families, someone did not eat all day In 1 out of 2 families, a child did not eat all day

Implications

The July survey confirmed that aid has slowed and even stopped in each of the six camps surveyed. Moreover, there are few work opportunities to fill the gap. Only 59% of families had at least one person working, often supporting six or more family members. Residents suffer relentless heat during the day compounded by limited access to food, clean drinking water, toilets, and essential medical care. Their tents and tarps are too small, forcing some families to live apart. People are not consulted about their needs and the recurrent threat of eviction only adds to their stress.



As of September 2010, just 20% of money pledged by the international community had been disbursed and 23% of those funds had been committed. Yet the basic human rights of camp residents must be prioritized immediately. In the words of one man interviewed, "It's as if we are forgotten."

Recommendations

We urge the Government of Haiti, donor states and international aid agencies to allocate more of their resources to meet the basic needs of Haitians living in camps. We also encourage all parties to adopt the following recommendations for implementing a rights-based approach to relief and reconstruction:

- **Quickly disburse aid** necessary to meet the basic needs of those living in displacement camps
- Follow the **UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement**
- **Promote participation** from camp residents in needs assessment and aid distribution
- Require that donors be **accountable to aid recipients**
- **Coordinate** with the Government of Haiti
- Encourage self-sufficiency through **employment opportunities**
- **Source food aid locally** to support local economy
- Improve and expand provision of **sturdy, safe shelter** for camp residents
- End the policy and practice of **forced evictions**

Additional Resources

The full report can be found at the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) website: www.ijdh.org/archives/14633



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Justice &
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Bureau des
Avocats
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(BAI)

