



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti

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Haiti's Earthquake Victims: "We Have Been Forgotten"

Human rights investigation finds desperate conditions in Haiti's tent cities

September 20, 2010; Boston, MA – Eight months after Haiti's devastating earthquake, more than 1.3 million Haitians continue to live in makeshift tent camps without adequate shelter, food or sanitation, according to a report released today by the [Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti](#) (IJDH). The report, titled ["We Have Been Forgotten": Conditions in Haiti's Displacement Camps Eight Months After the Earthquake](#), documents continuing desperation in Haiti's camps and recommends a rights-based approach to relief and reconstruction.

Despite the international community's historic generosity following the January 12, 2010 earthquake, the support has not been translated into effective assistance for the residents of approximately 1,300 makeshift tent camps, where conditions for some are getting worse, not better. "The basic needs of residents must be prioritized immediately. While the Government of Haiti bears the primary duty to protect the economic and social rights of its citizens, donor states and relief agencies must also meet certain standards in carrying out assistance to Haiti. This obligation arises from international law but also from the significant role the international community assumed in providing relief services in Haiti," said Nicole Phillips, Esq., IJDH Staff Attorney and the lead editor and coordinator of the report.

The findings presented in the report show that living conditions in the camps continue to violate basic human dignity. In 75% of families surveyed, at least one family member went an entire day without eating in the past week. In 50% of families surveyed, at least one of those family members was a child. "Our data show that aid to the camps has slowed and even stopped in some places, making life far worse for displaced families. Their basic human rights are being systematically violated," said Sarah Mi Ra Dougherty, co-author of the report. The camp investigation was conducted by a coalition of human rights organizations, including [IJDH](#), its Haiti-based affiliate the [Bureau des Avocats Internationaux](#), the IJDH-coordinated [Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network](#), and partner organizations [LAMP for Haiti Foundation](#) and [University of San Francisco School of Law Center for Law and Global Justice](#).

The report was presented before the [Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference](#)

in a forum organized by U.S. Representative John Conyers entitled, “Haiti: Finding the Path to Redevelopment.” The full report can be found at <http://ijdh.org/archives/14633>.

For more information, please visit IJDH’s Housing Rights Advocacy Project website at <http://ijdh.org/housing>.

About the Organizations:

[The Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti](#) (IJDH) and its Haiti-based affiliate the [Bureau des Avocats Internationaux](#) (BAI) fight for the human rights of Haiti’s poor. The IJDH-coordinated [Lawyers’ Earthquake Response Network](#) (LERN) is a network of over 400 lawyers and law students in the U.S. working with Haitian lawyers to implement a legal response to the earthquake in Haiti.

The [University of San Francisco School of Law Center for Law and Global Justice](#) is a focal point for the law school’s commitment to international justice and legal education with a global perspective.

The [LAMP for Haiti Foundation](#) advocates for the respect and protection of basic human rights in the areas of greatest misery and poverty in Cite Soleil, Port-au-Prince.