

## TESTIMONY OF MALYA VILLARD APPOLON

Delivered to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

During a Hearing on Precautionary Measure 340-10  
Women and Girls in Camps for Forcibly Displaced Persons in Haiti

March 25, 2011

Dear Honorable Members of the Inter American Commission on Human Rights:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of you today. My name is Malya Villard-Appolon. I am the General Coordinator and co-founder of KOFAVIV, a women's grassroots organization that is working with women who have been victims of sexual violence. I myself am a victim of rape.

Once again, we would like to thank the Commission for the previous recommendations that it issued to the Haitian Government to better protect the women and girls who have been experiencing sexual violence in the camps. More than a year, after the January 12 earthquake, the women and the girls are living in horrible unhygienic conditions and are facing great difficulties:

1. Camps residents do not have access to adequate food, water, or education.
2. The Haitian government has not developed viable action plans to:
  - a. Rebuild the economic livelihood of Haitian women.
  - b. And provide permanent housing for the displaced that are living in very overcrowded conditions.
3. In terms of health, victims of rape do not have access to quality emergency care within 72 hours to reduce risk of HIV and pregnancy.
4. In addition, there is no specialized medical unit to provide appropriate care to young children who are victims of rape.

All of these conditions are fueling this epidemic of sexual violence that women are experiencing.

KOFAVIV continues to work in the camps and in the communities. We help victims obtain medical care, psychological care, and find quality female attorneys who can bring their cases to court. We also help orphans, children who are working as domestic workers, and young girls who have been forced into prostitution after the earthquake.

Despite all of our efforts and our work, the United Nations Gender Based Violence sub-cluster working in Haiti has continued to refuse to include our organization's contact information and the contact information of other grassroots organizations on the referral cards.

To conclude we respectfully ask the Commission to visit Haiti and observe the current situation of women and girls who are living in the camps.

Thank you.