



School of Law



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti
Bureau des Avocats Internationaux

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Brian Concannon Jr., Esq., Brian@ijdh.org, (541) 263-0029
Nicole Phillips, Esq., Nicole@ijdh.org, (510) 715-2855

Haiti's Housing Crisis: Human rights investigation finds President Michel Martelly's 100-day housing plan delivered no improvement to people in Haiti's tent camps

(BOSTON, October 3, 2011) --- One-hundred days into Michel Martelly's presidency, earthquake victims still living in displacement camps were not receiving the resettlement assistance promised in the President's 100-day housing plan, according to a briefing paper released today by the Center for Law and Global Justice at the University of San Francisco School of Law (USF) and the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH). The survey looked at the six displacement [camps](#) targeted for closure under the plan.

The briefing paper, titled [*Haiti's Housing Crisis: Results of a Household Survey on the Progress of President Michel Martelly's 100-Day Plan to Close Six IDP Camps*](#), documents peoples' lack of access to information and consultation on resettlement options available under the plan, one camp closure where families watched as armed law enforcement destroyed their tents and belongings with sticks and machetes, and hand-outs of small cash payments that do not amount to sustainable housing assistance – all of which directly contradict the durable solutions touted under the plan.

An estimated 595,000 Haitians are still living in approximately 900 Internal Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in and around Port-au-Prince after last year's earthquake. President Martelly's housing plan is proposed as a model for addressing immediate housing needs by closing IDP camps, relocating the residents and commencing reconstruction. But 100 days into Martelly's presidency, no progress seems to have been made. A woman described her family's life in one of the six camps targeted by the President's plan as, "very stressful because we are fighting for our basic needs every day."

Results of the August survey of 150 households in those six IDP camps confirm that families are struggling to survive and need better housing options. "Three-quarters of the families surveyed in

the six camps had at least one family member go one or more days without eating the week prior to the survey. Over one-half of families with children had at least one child go without eating. Fifty-nine percent of families did not have daily access to clean and safe drinking water – which is particularly troubling in light of Haiti’s cholera epidemic that has infected 438,000 Haitians and taken 6,200 lives,” said Nicole Phillips, IJDH Staff Attorney and lead author of the paper. Phillips added that despite the desperate conditions in the camps, families are stuck there until the Martelly plan is implemented because without jobs, they cannot afford to rebuild their pre-earthquake home or rent a new place.

The Haiti Reconstruction Fund pledged \$78 million in August 2011 to fund President Martelly’s housing plan. “Implementing the plan could have significant benefits for displaced communities, assuming the government keeps its promises made in the plan,” says Brian Concannon Jr., Esq., Director of IJDH. “As funding commences, the community outreach and inclusion envisioned in the plan should commence immediately so that families are able to participate in every stage and ensure that the program responds to their needs.”

By contrast, the survey revealed a lack of community involvement in implementation of the housing plan to date. Most respondents had not been informed of or consulted about camp closure or relocation plans, including those whose camp had already been closed. Respondents reported that their limited encounters with relocation officials came in the form of asking residents to leave.

The briefing paper also recommends that the government’s housing plan include protections against violent and unlawful evictions, and that camps remain open until families are able to be resettled to locations that meet minimum security and living standards. Lastly, the paper underscores the need for cash payments for resettlement to be tied to a comprehensive housing assistance program. The paper warns that absent community consultation, the government plan may face a gap between the money allocated and the needs of target beneficiaries, limiting the effectiveness of the government’s cash grant housing program.

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.

At the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), we fight for the human rights of Haiti’s poor in court, on the streets, and wherever decisions about Haitians’ rights are made. We represent victims of injustice, including earthquake victims, victims of gender-based violence, and the unjustly imprisoned. Together with our Haitian affiliate, the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI), we have sixteen years of demonstrated success enforcing Haitians’ human rights in Haiti and abroad. Visit haitijustice.org. Follow @IJDH on Twitter.